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**THE DOCTRINE OF THE SELF  
IN THE THEOLOGY  
OF PAUL TILLICH**

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# ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis ..... The Doctrine of the Self in the Theology of Paul Tillich .....

The doctrine of the Self in the theology of Paul Tillich is not an easy structure to isolate since it pervades the entire theological system. It is, beyond any doubt, right at the heart of Tillich's thought as one of the vital components of the basic ontological structure as he sees it. It is my contention that the doctrine of the Self surreptitiously takes over as the operative basis of Tillich's theological formulations, and that the rest of his entire system can be viewed as a context against which this basic doctrine might be put in perspective.

For Tillich the foundational structure of reality is expressed in the Self-World correlation. In order to hold these together he seeks the ground of unity, applying his "principle of identity", as it is manifested in the Absolute or Being-itself. His analysis tries to set forth this ontological structure within a formal system of theological concepts. As long as he is dealing in abstract categories and concepts he is consistent. He is able to apply his methodology which aims at expressing the underlying identity by holding correlated polarities in tension, while identifying levels of being to resolve apparent discrepancies. This is the key to understanding his system. These aims and ideas developed in the course of his life and career which was deeply invested in nineteenth century thought-forms and attitudes, but was lived out and judged by the first half of the twentieth century.

The testing of his ideas and systematic formulations arose from the historic and personal experiences to which he was subjected. His central doctrine of the Self was challenged by his existential selfhood which meant that his theological answers were given to existential questions. In this sense at least his theology is autobiographical. The organization of his Systematic Theology is his attempt to give theological answers to five human existential questions. I have suggested that he was preoccupied with the human situation and attracted to the existentialist position, especially in his understanding of anxiety, hubris, finitude and courage. Yet because these were always discussed and analysed in an abstract and objective way, Tillich tried to subordinate this subject matter within his formal treatment of ontology and essential being. Tillich did try to give a large place to existence within his system, although he could never surrender his nineteenth century search for harmony and identity and this finally reduced existential reality as experienced to symbols within his essentialist system.

The basic correlation of the Self and the world makes possible a way for the Self to become aware of the world and also of itself. Self-awareness is based in self-centeredness; whereas world-awareness leads to self-transcendence. From this proposition Tillich seeks to show how man rises from his existential knowledge of his finitude to higher knowledge of ontology. This is the "hinge" in Tillich's thought whereby he seeks to overcome the basic tension between reality as experienced under the givenness of creation

within the bounds of human finitude and ontological reality. The operating category is freedom which allows man to transcend himself and fulfil his destiny as the "image of God". By transforming the self into an essential being, however, the existential self loses out. Tillich's use of spirit as a "symbol" suggests that he is aware of this lack of reality and the need to employ more dynamic terms and concepts. It is when he discusses the doctrine of the Self formally within the system that Tillich uses the concept of spirit to set forth the dynamic principle of the "totally centered self", which actualizes its potential in such a way as to achieve self-transcendence. The spirit is the motivating power which integrates life in the centre of the self and moves this centre to rise to higher levels of being.

Tillich's overriding ontological concern, as the ground of unity for the philosophical tension with which he lived, itself became one pole of a polarity between ontology and human experience. On the one hand he was seeking for the grand rationalization, the system which would identify all reality within an intellectual continuum, while on the other hand he lived through times of tremendous change and upheaval. He was rooted deep in traditional Christianity, trained in the Liberal era, caught up in the social movements of his day in Germany, cast out of the fatherland, exposed to many of the great and searching issues of this century, and faced with the task of systematizing his insights for his classroom work. The only ground of unity between these poles is his understanding of the Self. And because of this tension between these poles, his doctrine of the Self shifts from abstract analysis, methodically set forth, on the one hand, to the warm vibrant faith of a soul searching for salvation and hope on the other. How to make sense out of his own experience is Tillich's task. This underlying tension is never completely resolved.



### Summary of the Thesis

The doctrine of the Self in the theology of Paul Tillich is not an easy doctrine to isolate since it pervades the entire theological system. It is, beyond any doubt, right at the heart of Tillich's thought as one of the vital components of the basic ontological structure as he sees it. It is my contention that the doctrine of the Self surreptitiously takes over as the operative basis of Tillich's theological formulations, and that the rest of his entire system can be viewed as a context against which this basic doctrine might be put in perspective.

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The testing of his ideas and systematic formulations arose from the historical and personal experiences to which he was subjected. His central doctrine of the Self was challenged by his existential selfhood which meant that his theological answers were given to existential questions. In this sense at least his theology is autobiographical. The organization of his Systematic Theology is his attempt to give theological answers to five human



existential questions. I have suggested that he was preoccupied with the human situation and attracted to the existentialist position, especially in his understanding of anxiety, hubris, finitude and courage. Yet because these were always discussed and analysed in an abstract and objective way, Tillich tried to subordinate this subject matter within his formal treatment of ontology and essential being. Tillich did try to give a large place to existence within his system, although he could never surrender his nineteenth century search for harmony and identity and this finally reduced existential reality as experienced to symbols within his essentialist system.

The basic correlation of the Self and the world makes possible a way for the Self to become aware of the world and also of itself. Self-awareness is based in self-centeredness; whereas world-awareness leads to self-transcendence. From this proposition Tillich seeks to show how man rises from his existential knowledge of his finitude to higher knowledge of ontology. This is the "hinge" in Tillich's thought whereby he seeks to overcome the basic tension between reality as experienced under the givenness of creation within the bounds of human finitude and ontological reality. The operating category is freedom which allows man to transcend himself and fulfil his destiny as the "image of God". By transforming the self into an essential being, however, the existential self loses out. Tillich's use of spirit as a "symbol" suggests that he is aware of this lack of reality and the need to employ more dynamic terms and concepts. It is when he discusses the doctrine of the Self formally within the system that Tillich uses the concept of spirit to set forth the dynamic principle of the "totally centered self", which actualizes its potential in such a way as to achieve self-transcendence. The spirit is the motivating power which integrates life in the centre of the self and then moves this centre to rise to higher levels of being.

Tillich's overriding ontological concern, as the ground of unity for the philosophical tension with which he lived, itself became one pole of a polarity between ontology and human experience. On the one hand he was seeking for the grand rationalization, the system which would identify all reality within an intellectual continuum, while on the other hand he lived through times of tremendous change and upheaval. He was rooted deep in traditional Christianity, trained in the Liberal era, caught up in the social movements of his day in Germany, cast out of the fatherland, exposed to many of the great and searching issues of this century, and faced with the task of systematizing his insights for his classroom work. The only ground of unity between these poles is his understanding of the Self. And because of this tension between these poles, his doctrine of the Self shifts from abstract analysis, methodically set forth, on the one hand, to the warm vibrant faith of a soul searching for salvation and hope on the other. How to make sense out of his own experience is Tillich's task. This underlying tension is never completely resolved.

### Acknowledgements

I am indebted first and foremost to Paul Tillich himself, whose system is a challenge to anyone and it is only after serious wrestling with his terminology and ideas that it becomes clear, but when it does so it begins to lay hold even on the unwilling student and critic. The exercise of studying for and preparing this thesis over an extended period of time and across the waters from my advisers has been both difficult and maturing since the University of Edinburgh holds its standards high. I would like to thank my advisers for bearing with me in this task and offering their helpful comments and guidance. Principal Charles Duthie set me on the course, then received a promotion and moved away from Edinburgh. Dr. Alister Campbell, recently added to the teaching staff at New College, attempted to fill in although until this spring he had to correspond with an overseas student whom he had never met. Last but by no means least I am grateful for the wise and incisive counsel supplied by my adviser and teacher at New College, the Rev. James B. Torrance who has guided me from the beginning of this investigation and has borne with me over the years to completion.





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## I. INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the Self in the theology of Paul Tillich is not an easy doctrine to isolate since it pervades the entire theological system. It is, beyond any doubt, right at the heart of Tillich's thought as one of the vital components of the basic ontological structure as he sees it. It is my contention that the doctrine of the Self surreptitiously takes over as the operative basis of Tillich's theological formulations, and that the rest of his entire system can be viewed as a context against which this basic doctrine might be put in perspective.

For Tillich the basic ontological structure of reality can be expressed in the Self-world correlation. He seeks to hold these two poles together by the use of his "principle of identity" by which he seeks a ground of unity in which both poles can be located. In this case the ground of unity is Being-itself, the Absolute, or God who is all in all, holding together in relationship both the objective world and the realm of the Self, the subjective reality of human personal being.

This type of formulation by polarities within a basic correlation, both finding meaning in a greater unity, is basic to Tillich's methodology. The polar elements are not always opposites, but are balanced elements, often representing the general on one side over against the particular on the other. In the case of the Self-world polarity this is obvious, and it is my contention that in such a polarity the subjective and the particular tends to take precedence over the objective and the general. The world can be dismissed by classification into abstract categories in a coherent system of thought, but the Self defies classification by its very complexity and therefore becomes the centre of investigation. The real subject becomes the Self and the world its context of relationships within the larger context of the being of God.

In making such a distinction, another of Tillich's principal methods, namely, hierarchical ordering, is seen. While Tillich argues that the ontological takes precedence over other concerns, it can also be argued that the existential takes precedence as I have just done. According to Tillich, the priority of the ontological leads to the application of his systematic analysis in a universal way. This would mean that his doctrine of the Self is universally for everyman, or, as he would put it, that it is the line of development of the potentiality implicit in all men. In this way he is arguing from particular and concrete premises; the Self as experienced directly, the Self as observed by science, the Self as manifested in Jesus Christ, the Self in anxiety, and so on, - to the general doctrine of the Self as a self-transcending personal being.

It is my contention that in fact the reverse is true. The further away from the concrete Self which Tillich experiences, namely Tillich's own person, that he expands into his system of thought, the more he is dealing with contextual issues rather than with basic reality. This is not to suggest that the general issues are not real, they are; but it becomes a question of priority within his systematic methodology. *Sentence*

It is my observation that in either approach his Christology suffers. In effect he is attempting to fit Jesus Christ into his systematic categories as it comes out in the Systematic Theology itself. To do so does not take full account of the person of Christ, consequently it becomes necessary for Tillich to suspend the rigid application of his theological methodology and the entire section dealing with the estrangement of man in his predicament and the solution that Christ effects becomes a statement of faith, simply a restatement of his basic Christian tradition to which he is committed.

On the other hand, if Tillich's doctrine of the Self is actually auto-

biographical, as I suggest, then Jesus Christ is seen as an extension of the Self as experienced and as a fulfilled idealized form of Self. This might be too blunt a way of expressing how this approach comes out, but it has a direct parallel with the symbolic effect that his father's strict Lutheran position had for his thinking in his younger days. Tillich admits that the struggle he had for intellectual freedom, freedom from his father's authoritarian stance, was the greatest single event in his early life. Now Jesus Christ for Tillich is the paradigm man, true humanity, the New Being in whom the implicit potential in everyman can be seen actualized reality. Christ is mediator and saviour in that He is our example.

Since Tillich's doctrine of the Self can be considered from an autobiographical point of view it is appropriate to set out the development of his thought following its chronological development. This I have done, beginning with the philosophical foundations laid in his early years as a theologian in Germany, noting his thesis on the work of Schelling in 1912 from whom he drew his basic patterns of thought, and his essay in 1944 on Existentialist Philosophy which also had a tremendous effect on the later development of his thinking. The tension between the romantic idealistic viewpoint and the existentialist is never resolved by Tillich, but he seeks to hold the two together in polar relation, with the ground of unity between them being his ontological concern. This will account for ontology being a preoccupation for him.

Within his theology another polarity emerges in the tension between the one and the many, between the social dimension of the faith which he first investigated in terms of his kairos doctrine, and the personal dimension of the faith which he later developed in terms of his New Being doctrine which became the key to his Christology, based on the doctrine of the Self. The ground of



between these two poles is not apparent in Tillich's system and leaves him open to criticism of shifting his ground. In his 1948 "Protestant Era" he discusses his kairos doctrine and its implications. His position on the New Being, developed in his Systematic Theology Vol. II, does suffer from this unresolved tension and in some ways doesn't belong in the system as it reflects a departure from his methodology. Yet it is probably his study of existential anxiety and other psychological factors in the decade between 1948 and 1957 that brought him to this position. For this reason I have given quite a large amount of space to some of the ideas, both from the era of Biblical theology which erupted at this time as well as from historical and psychoanalytical studies, which must have influenced Tillich as the intellectual climate of that decade. It is no accident that it was in 1952 when he wrote "The Courage to Be" which focused on the problem of anxiety. This predisposed him to consider the personal implications of his theology which emerged in his doctrine of the New Being. Here we have the existential overcoming the systematic.

It is my contention that because Tillich neglected the Biblical foundation, and especially the Hebrew understanding of the Self, that his theological polarity was not adequately resolved and his doctrine of the Self suffered accordingly. For this reason he shifts his emphasis of Self-hood.

Tillich's overriding ontological concern, as the ground of unity for the philosophical tension with which he lived, itself became one pole of a polarity between ontology and human experience. On the one hand he was seeking for the grand rationalization, the system which would identify all reality within an intellectual continuum, while on the other hand he lived through times of tremendous change and strain on German people in particular.

He was rooted deep in traditional Christian tradition, trained in the Liberal era, caught up in the social activism of his day, cast out of his fatherland, exposed to many of the great and searching issues of this century, and faced with the task of systematizing all this for his classroom work. The only ground of unity between these poles is his doctrine of the Self.

But because of the basic tension between the two poles, his doctrine of the Self shifts from an abstract analysis, methodically set forth, on the one hand, to the vibrant, warm faith of a soul-search for salvation on the other. How to make sense out of his own experience is Tillich's problem. How to fit this doctrine into his system is another matter, and some of these problems we have been looking at briefly.

In terms of human experience, Tillich is caught in the tension between Christian religion on the one hand and Biblical faith on the other. From time to time he breaks into his discussion, particularly in the Systematic Theology, to discuss either one or other of these poles. In his discussion of Christian religion or tradition, he tends to play down the significance of commitment to a particular tradition. He would rather see religion as a part of human culture, with creeds and confessions and what has been termed institutional religion of symbolic value only. Christian faith, however, for Tillich is vibrant and real, personal and existential. Faith and anxiety are in tension, but are resolved in the unity of a basic acceptance, in terms of being grasped by the ground of our being. The validity of Christian religion for Tillich becomes intensely personal and leads to a doctrine of the Self which includes a spiritual destiny.

The other pole of Biblical faith is correspondingly weak in terms of objective commitment, either as accepting or hearing the Word of God. The Hebrew and the Greek theological approaches are in tension here, but they are

not Biblically resolved because Tillich does not give sufficient place to Hebrew patterns of thinking and acting. Since he prefers the Greek approach, and that was his early training in the classics, he tends to look at the Biblical material from a Greek perspective, seeking basic patterns of thought, ideas which can be systematized, unity and identity which smooths out differences. This particular tension Tillich resolves by recognizing only one pole, the Greek side, hence the inherent weakness.

The basic tension, however, seems to be recognized by Tillich, even though not properly identified, and he discusses the Biblical material over against another point of view, as it were, sometimes using the classical pagan Greek ideas against the Biblical Greek of the New Testament, or sometimes using ideas from the social sciences (Freud, for example, makes use of Greek symbolism to describe personality) opposed to the Biblical. This makes his use of Scripture rather unsatisfactory and partial.

His stress on the principle of identity in the end of the day puts Tillich in the position of being an essentialist philosopher. Tillich's principle of identity is the position he chose when he rejected the so-called principle of the Extra-Calvinisticum, which he did early in his career. This becomes both the strength and the weakness of his final systematic effort to set forth the doctrine of the Self which he does in the Systematic Theology Vol. III in a masterful way. This final expression of this central doctrine in 1963, just two years before his death, is in fact the summation not only of the system but of his own selfhood as he understood it. The progress of the Self in development throughout the life process, as seen in its various stages and relationships, bridges the gap between the organic level and the divine level through self-realization and self-transcendence. For Tillich the gap is bridgable for everyman.



Yet in the final analysis Tillich's Self is isolated. It is a lonely trip across the gap, and God seems very generalized and abstract, like the immensity of the night sky. The analysis in Vol. III does not depend upon the Christology of the New Being in Vol. II. Perhaps Tillich intends that the formal analysis must, in the first instance, apply to Jesus Christ, but He is but one among many. Tillich sets this forth as applying to everyman, but does it really? Or does it only apply to Tillich himself as his self-understanding and aim in life, hopefully set out to be of assistance to others along the way? The obscurity of his system presents a gap for everyman far greater than the so-called Extra-Calvinisticum which is bridged by the Word of God incarnate in Christ Jesus, the Mediator and Saviour, showing a Father's love.

**II. PAUL TILlich: HIS METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH**

- 1. The Life and Thought of Paul Tillich**
- 2. His 1912 Thesis on Schelling's Ontology**
- 3. "The Protestant Era" (1948)**
- 4. "Existential Philosophy" (1944)**
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## The Life and Thought of Paul Tillich

The son of a Lutheran pastor in the small village of Starzeddel, in the province of Brandenburg in Prussia, Paul Johannes Tillich was born on August 20th, 1886. His father shortly was made superintendent of the diocese, then about 1900 was called to Berlin to an administrative post within the Prussian Territorial Church.

Paul was born into a generation distinguished by the fact that it grew up between two important periods of history. He enjoyed a normal childhood and developed a strong appreciation for nature. He was educated at a local school and the gymnasium or grammar school at a nearby city. As a youth he was known to have a rather romantic imagination, but this settled or broadened later into a philosophical imagination. Speaking of his early childhood, he says:

My tie with the country lies (deep) in my soul. Nearly all great memories, and all strong longings are interlaced with landscapes, with the soil and with the weather, with corn fields, and the smell of autumnal potato foliage, with the forms of clouds, with wind, flowers and woods . . .

Most important, however, was the fact that from my eighth year onward annually I spent some weeks, later even months, by the seaside. The experience of the infinite bordering upon the finite, as one has it by the sea . . . supplied my imagination with a symbol from which feeling could win substance.<sup>1</sup>

At the gymnasium the young Tillich studied classics, being deeply interested in classical Greek, both the language and the culture. This interest led to his philosophical interest and by the time he entered the University of Berlin he possessed a basic acquaintance with the history of philosophy, and had been introduced to the ideas of Kant and Fichte. His university studies were pursued in Berlin, Tübingen, and Halle, studying philosophy and theology.

The process of growing up included a major struggle for independence from his father's authority which extended to the intellectual realm as well as the normal process of growing up. He comments:

My father's authority, which was at once personal and intellectual, and which because of his position in the Church, coincided for me with the religious authority of revelation, made every manifestation of autonomous thinking a piece of religious daring, and involved the critique of authority in a sense of guilt. The immemorial experience of mankind, and new knowledge can be won only through breaking a taboo, that all autonomous thinking is accompanied by a consciousness of guilt, has been a fundamental experience of my own life.

Working through to independence from his father was a major step in Paul's growing philosophical understanding of selfhood.

In university, Paul studied along two lines of thought. One line was the romantic where he was concerned about nature and identity, especially Schleiermacher's theology of feeling, Hegel's philosophy of spirit, and Schelling's philosophy of freedom. The other line was the social philosophy of revolution dealing with history and social activism, which he later formulated as the "Protestant principle" which affected his understanding of the "Kairos doctrine" and "justification by or through faith". Kaeher and Schelling had a great influence on his thought at this point.

Tillich is quite open about his dependence upon Schelling:

The relation of these fundamental thoughts of theology to my philosophical development was determined, first of all, by the work of Schelling, particularly the ideas of his later period. I thought that, fundamentally, I had found the union of theology and philosophy in the philosophical explanation of the Christian doctrine through the older Schelling, in his founding of a Christian philosophy of existence in contrast to Hegel's humanistic philosophy of essence and in his interpretation of history as the History of Salvation. I must confess, that even today, I find more 'theonomous philosophy' in Schelling than in any of the other idealists. But to be sure, not even Schelling<sup>3</sup> was able to bring about a unity of theology and philosophy.



After concluding his theological studies in 1912, he served as an assistant pastor until the outbreak of the Great War. During the war he served as a field chaplain in the German army. For recreation at this time he discovered the world of art forms, a new and liberating experience for him personally. But at the same time the experience of tragedy in life left its deep mark, leading him to modify his ideas of Schelling's philosophy of history to include the necessity of struggle in history, expanding his idea of a dynamic ontology where both being and becoming in history are seen in relationship.

After the war he returned briefly to parish work for about two years during which time he took part in organizing and leading the German Religious-Socialist movement. This movement was for the most part a scholarly movement attempting to interpret the times over against the popular idealistic utopianism of Marxist teachings, and at the same time attempting to be politically active in the cause of reform. Tillich's "kairos" concept, closely akin to the "Protestant principle", denied the permanence of any socio-political structure in history, and taught that through crisis new and creative forms emerge in time. It was an idea of continuous reform and social transformation.

In those years of ferment in the European situation following the first World War, Paul Tillich and Karl Barth were both actively developing their ideas along widely divergent lines. Tillich was beginning to think in terms of a theology of culture and history, while Barth, in Der Romerbrief,<sup>4</sup> argued that God stood in judgment over against the creation including man and human culture. For Barth the Word of God was a word of judgment pointing man away from himself and away from the world to the reality of God revealed in Christ. For Tillich, man's creativity, cultural potentialities and

achievements was the way the new creation, the New Being, was realized in history through the ongoing process of renewal. This basic difference was seen in clear focus in an exchange of views in 1923.<sup>5</sup>

From 1919 until 1924, Tillich taught in the University of Berlin and was developing his ideas on his theology of culture. He lectured on subjects which included the relation of religion to politics, art, philosophy, depth psychology, and sociology. At this time he was very close to Ernst Troeltsch, many of whose views he shared. Troeltsch and Gogarten, Barth's friend, had an exchange of views in a leading theological journal, and soon both Barth and Tillich had also contributed articles. Tillich's article was entitled: "Critical and Positive Paradox: A Statement of Views in Opposition to Karl Barth and F. Gogarten".<sup>6</sup>

Tillich's criticism of Barth and Gogarten rests on a rejection of the principle of judgment or crisis as a negative critique of man and his struggles in history by a transcendent God. He is afraid of dualism, arbitrary authority in revelation, and absolutizing Jesus of Nazareth and the community that is formed around him. He feels that this does violence to the nonobjectifiable character of faith, and brings back a new form of legalistic absolute religion which is dehumanized. In fact, this is Tillich's rejection of Transcendentalism of the Extra Calvinisticum concept.<sup>7</sup>

Karl Barth made a spirited reply and Tillich ended the discussion by attempting a restatement rather than a reply to Barth's points. Neither man basically changed his basic stance from that time. Tillich argued for a principle of immanent dynamism, conceiving of the Unconditional as the ultimate source of both the "Yes" and the "No" in the on-going processes of creation and destruction, grace and judgment, in history. Barth affirmed a transcendent, dynamic, and personal God existing apart from the creation who had

freely and uniquely revealed Himself in the historic event of the Incarnation of Christ of which the Scriptures witness. Neither man pursued the dialogue further.

In 1924, he accepted, somewhat reluctantly, a theological chair at the University of Marburg but stayed there only briefly. The following year he moved to the University of Dresden to become Professor of the Science of Religion. While there he continued his interest in the Religious-Socialist movement, writing "The Religious Situation of the Present" in 1926. He also began work on what became eventually his "Systematic Theology". No major shift in his ideas seems yet evident. Then later, in 1929, he was appointed professor of philosophy in the University of Frankfurt where he continued until he was forced by the Nazi regime to leave Germany when they came to power in 1933. It was after his move to Frankfurt that he became increasingly active in opposing the authoritarian ideology of the National Socialists and he was quite outspoken. Hitler had him dismissed from Frankfurt.

In America, Reinhold Niebuhr had been impressed with his writings and, while visiting Germany in 1933, urged him to come to New York. Tillich accepted the chair of Philosophical Theology in the famous Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1933, and continued there for twenty-two years. It is an irony of history that the cohesive authoritarian structure of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany provided a stronger basis of opposition to the Nazi government in Germany than did the Religious-Socialist movement which was openly opposed to authoritarian structures on the "kairos" principle. This truth impressed itself upon Tillich and may help to account for a shift in his definition of man and society. While this struggle was going on in Germany, Tillich settled into America. About the same time as Dietrich Bonhoeffer caught the last boat back to his native Germany to join

the resistance movement in 1940, Paul Tillich became an American citizen.

Until the publication in English of his "Protestant Era" in 1951, Paul Tillich was not very well known outside of the lecture room and academic circles in the English-speaking world. Throughout the 1950's he published a number of books including among others: "The Courage to Be", "Love, Power and Justice", "The Shaking of the Foundations", "The New Being", and "The Dynamics of Faith". These all appealed to a popular audience. Then between the years 1951 and 1963 he completed his three-volumed magnum opus, his "Systematic Theology".

In these later writings in the 1950's, revealing both the continuity and the shift in Tillich's understanding of man and society, his new emphasis is away from or a deemphasis of the kairos concept and a new stress on the idea of "the New Being in Christ". George Tavad<sup>8</sup> in his analysis "Paul Tillich and the Christian Message" seeks to show that Tillich is simply in a period of transition or development in his thought. But Tillich himself in an article in the Christian Century<sup>9</sup> entitled "Beyond Religious Socialism" comments to the effect that it is a real change even if not a very dramatic one.

David Hopper<sup>10</sup> argues,

In general Tillich's post-World War II writings do accent the concept of the New Being and offer fewer attempts to interpret the political-social situation. . . . Tillich at one place made a distinction between two types of existentialism: one that derives from the existence of the individual and another that derives from the historical-political situation. . . . When one recognizes this distinction between an individualistic and a corporate historical existentialism, then Tillich's 1949 discussion of changes in his point of view becomes open to further analysis. . . . That it was not in fact a contradiction of his kairos philosophy can be explained by the fact that, by means of a distinctive philosophical definition of man, the definition of man as a microcosm, Tillich was able to shift his emphasis from the macrocosm (in this case the spiritual-historical situation of society at large) to the microcosm (the individual) without essentially revising his basic ontology. But what Tillich did thereby was essentially to abandon his earlier



preoccupation with the broad social-political dimensions of history in order to offer a formulation ("New Being") more open to individualistic applications.

In the article in the *Christian Century*, Tillich points out that the influences leading to his change of mind include the emphasis placed on social ethics in America, a new and deeper appreciation of "therapeutic or depth psychology"<sup>11</sup> and the "more recent existential philosophy as developed by Heidegger, Jaspers, and Sartre."<sup>11</sup> And under these influences he wrote his "Systematic Theology", having first worked out many of the individualistic dimensions of his thought in the 1950 Terry Lectures at Yale which were later published as "The Courage to Be". Throughout all his writings, however, his philosophical ideas were rooted consistently in ontology. His basic metaphysical interest is the ground of his system of thought.

In order to understand Tillich's ontological frame of reference underlying his system including his kairos doctrine and his New Being concept it is necessary to go back to his 1912 treatise on "Mysticism and Guilt-consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development". Here is the development of the central categories of his ontology which are later expounded in his "Systematic Theology".

At the age of sixty-nine when most people would think of retiring, Tillich moved from Union Seminary to take up the position of University Professor at the Harvard Divinity School in Harvard University. There he gave only special lectures to packed classrooms of advanced students. He also gave the same kind of special lectures at the Chicago Divinity School in the University of Chicago until his death in 1965.

Footnotes to Chapter 1

1. The Interpretation of History, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936) p. 7. Paul Tillich personally relates his developing thought in three places of his voluminous works, i.e., The Interpretation of History, The Protestant Era (Chicago: Phoenix Books 1957 ed.) p. v - xxv, and in the volume edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, The Theology of Paul Tillich (New York: The MacMillan Co. 1964). References to other essays are not so valuable as his definitive presentations in these three instances mentioned.
2. Ibid., p. 22, 23.
3. Ibid., p. 35.
4. Karl Barth, Der Römerbrief (Bern: B. A. Baschlin, 1919); English translation by Edwyn C. Hoskyns from the sixth German edition (London: Oxford U. Press, 1933).
5. Theologische Blätter, ed. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, (1923), Vol. II, p. 263 - 269. Paul Tillich's article "Critical and Positive Paradox: A Statement of Views in Opposition to Karl Barth and Friedrich Gogarten" is as close to an actual confrontation of views that he comes in his reaction against Barth's position.
6. Ibid., p. 263 - 269.
7. cf. Kegley and Bretall, The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 5 where Tillich is discussing the early influences upon him, including his romantic communication with nature as "mystical participation", the impact of the German romantic poets, and his Lutheran background:  
  

Theologians know that one of the points of disagreement between the two wings of the Continental Reformation, the Lutheran and the Reformed, was the so-called 'Extra-Calvinisticum', the doctrine that the finite is not capable of the infinite (non capax infiniti), and that consequently in Christ the two natures, the divine and the human, remained outside each other. Against this doctrine the Lutherans asserted the 'Infra Lutheranism': namely, the view that in Christ there is a mutual indwelling of the two natures. This difference means that on Lutheran ground the vision of the presence of the infinite in everything finite was theologically affirmed, that nature mysticism was possible and real, whereas on Calvinistic ground such an attitude is suspect of pantheism and the divine transcendence is understood in a way which for a Lutheran is suspect of deism.
8. George Tavad, Paul Tillich and the Christian Message, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962) p. 112. Tavad recognizes that there is a shift in Tillich's thinking at this time, but he adds the observation that his focus shifts from the "kairos doctrine" over to the "New Being doctrine", which he sees as evolution in thought.

9. Paul Tillich, "Beyond Religious Socialism"; The Christian Century, Vol. LXCI, No. 24 (June 15, 1944), p. 733.
10. David Hopper, Tillich: A Theological Portrait, (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1968) p. 97 - 100.
11. Op cit. p. 733.

## His 1912 Thesis on Schelling's Ontology

Tillich throughout his lifetime is concerned with the ontological questions. His ideas reveal a unity in his point of view at all stages of his life, even in his "change of mind". Fundamentally he remains unchanged in his deepest understanding of this frame of reference. To uncover the roots of his philosophical presuppositions, we must go back to his early training.

In 1926 while involved with the Religious Socialism movement he wrote:

It may be noted that at the present time the metaphysics of being is less highly developed than is the metaphysics of history. The fact is not due to chance. Medieval metaphysics was a metaphysics of being because it arose out of the soil of static, non-historical mysticism. In the Protestant world the dynamic, moving spirit of historical reality has come to prevail in an increasing degree. The meaning of history seems more important to the mind than does the meaning of being . . . The metaphysics of history naturally reacts on the metaphysics of being.<sup>1</sup>

He is concerned to show the relationship between the two aspects of metaphysical thought and their deeper ground of unity. Tillich was always prepared to stress that the metaphysical questions should not be treated in a secondary way in relation to history, but should be seen as foundational or primary in order to see meaning in historic process.

To investigate Tillich's metaphysical understanding which pervaded his point of view we need to read his dissertation prepared for the degree of Licentiate of Theology in 1912, entitled "Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development".<sup>2</sup> In this book is the outline of his philosophical frame of reference, setting the ontological boundaries of his thinking. Here Tillich defends Schelling as a thinker and argues that he is one of the great philosophers to be reckoned with.



He divides his thesis into three parts. The first section deals with the major problems that Schelling sets out to tackle. This section is largely an historical definition of the various approaches to the philosophical problems that Schelling and others of his day faced. The second part sets out the first attempts that Schelling makes to provide some answers and the resulting shortfall of these attempts. Then the third part sets out Schelling's "second period" of his "positive philosophy" which Tillich regards as a conclusive "solution". Thus the first and third sections provide us with the background of Tillich's own ontological position.

He opens with this paragraph:

Mysticism and guilt-consciousness, feeling of unity with the Absolute and consciousness of opposition to God, the principle of the identity of the absolute and individual spirit and the experience of the contradiction between the holy Lord and the sinful creature: this is an antinomy the solution of which has been earnestly sought by religious thought in the Church down through the centuries - and it must ever again be sought. On the one side the will to truth finds satisfaction where the unity of the knower and the object known is attained, where the Absolute is as much the subject of knowledge as the object of knowledge. On the other side, the moral law - where it is grasped in its depth - discloses the God-defying quality of the will, the enmity of the subject towards God.<sup>3</sup>

Tillich feels that the tension between truth and morality in the history of Western thought are represented in the conflicting symbols of the Greek vision of timeless, self-contained truth on the one hand, and of the holy, exalted God of Israel who is a consuming fire. If one is stressed, the other side becomes ignored. But Tillich feels that Schelling has devised a synthesis of truth and morality by holding both mysticism and guilt in balance within his ontology.

Tillich's main concern, carrying through from his student days under the influence of Schelling, is to produce an ontological structure that will

reconcile the basic paradoxes and cleavages in reality. Hence in his Systematic Theology he makes use of the dialectical method of setting up polarities and then seeking the greater unity which will hold them together, albeit in tension, e.g. self-world, subject-object, etc.

Much of his basic position which is later expanded in the Systematic Theology is outlined in the ontological arguments in his 1912 Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness, although the definitive work is the later one. The first principle he makes use of extensively in his methodology is what he terms "gradualistic metaphysics" or hierarchical ordering of reality into levels of being, thus discovering the principle of identity which will hold them together in a greater unity. He points this out:

In its philosophical transformation monarchical monotheism appears as gradualistic metaphysics. The religious hierarchy is transformed into a hierarchy of powers of being ('The Great Chain of Being'). Ever since Plato wrote his Symposium and Aristotle his Metaphysics this type of thinking has influenced the Western world in many ways. The absolute is the highest in a scale of relative degrees of being (Plotinus, Dionysius, the Scholastics). The nearer a thing or a sphere of reality is to the absolute, the more being is embodied in it. God is the highest being. The terms 'degrees of being', 'more being', 'less being', are meaningful only if being is not the predicate of an existential judgment but rather if being means 'the power of being'. Leibniz's monadology is an outstanding example of hierarchical thinking in modern philosophy. The degree of conscious perception determines the ontological status of a monad, from the lowest form of being to God as the central monad. The romantic philosophy of nature applies the hierarchical principle to the different levels of the natural and the spiritual world. It is a triumph of hierarchical thinking that evolutionary philosophers since Hegel's time have employed the formerly static degrees of being as standards of progress in their schemes of dynamic development.<sup>4</sup>

Tillich makes use of the hierarchical principle throughout his Systematic Theology but it is interesting that he feels he must go to great lengths in volume three to attack "levels" as such since he suggests that often the idea of level is used as a means of isolating reality into

separate categories without noting the interaction and hence destroying the greater unity. However he does in fact make use of levels within his hierarchical order:

They decide the establishment of the animal dimension above the dimension of the vegetative. They decide that the dimension of inner awareness surpasses the biological and is surpassed by the dimension of the spirit. They decide that man is the highest being because his center is all-embracing. In contrast to all other beings, man does not have only environment; he has world, the structured unity of all possible content. This and its implications make him the highest being.<sup>5</sup>

To avoid the problem of "levels", he prefers to use "dimensions" in his own hierarchical ordering and thus preserve the unity of being.

From Schelling, Tillich learned his second principle of methodology to eliminate ontological conflict, that of the principle of polarization. It is an adaptation of the old coincidence of opposites. It is a balance between the separate though related elements, rather than strict opposites. Tillich sets up the polar opposites, not to show their complete disparity, but rather to point to the ground of unity between them, each taken alone is but a distortion or extreme within the ground of unity. Dialectics, for Tillich, are thus much closer to Hegel's principles than to Kierkegaard's paradoxes. God, for Tillich, is in the last analysis a synthesis, containing polar balance within being-itself:

The polar character of the ontological elements is rooted in the divine life, but the divine life is not subject to this polarity. Within the divine life, every ontological element includes its polar element completely, without tension and without the threat of dissolution, for God is being-itself. However, there is a difference between the first and the second elements in each polarity with regard to their power of symbolizing the divine life. The elements of individualization, dynamics, and freedom represent the self or subject side of the basic ontological structure within the polarity to which they belong. The elements of participation, form and destiny represent the world or object side of the basic ontological structure within the polarity to which they

belong. Both sides are rooted in the divine life. But the first side determines the existential relationship between God and man, which is the source of all symbolization.<sup>6</sup>

From this key passage we are given a clue as to the basic self-world polarity within the synthesis of the divine absolute or being-itself. And here is the core of Tillich's ontological concept, as well as his understanding of the human position within this concept. Tillich's doctrine of the self can only be understood in the light of his methodology as well as this basic ontological structure. This is the context of his thinking and directs the course of his doctrine of man.

He continues in the same chapter to express this same thought:

Man is a self who has a world. As a self he is an individual person who participates universally, he is a dynamic self-transcending agent within a special and a general form, and he is freedom which has a special destiny and which participates in a general destiny. Therefore, man symbolizes that which is his ultimate concern in terms taken from his own being. From the subjective side of the polarities he takes - or more exactly, receives - the material with which he symbolizes the divine life. He sees the divine life as personal, dynamic, and free. He cannot see it any other way, for God is man's ultimate concern, and therefore he stands in analogy to that which man himself is. But the religious mind - theologically speaking man in the correlation of revelation - always realizes implicitly, if not explicitly, that the other side of the polarities also is completely present in the side he uses as symbolic material. God is called a person, but he is a person not in finite separation but, in an absolute and unconditional participation in everything.<sup>7</sup>

Tillich proceeds to show how God transcends both self and world since the absolute includes both but cannot be identified with either one. God cannot be a "self", he says, because this term implies separation from all that is not self, since it stands alone in isolation and particularity. Just as God cannot be identified with self, neither can he be identified with world for the same reason. Particularity can symbolize only being-itself, and therefore can be analogous at best for basic ontological



structures. One element cannot stand for the whole though it participates in the whole. Selfhood, therefore, for Tillich represents the individualized person.

Tillich's third principle of methodology, which he also learned from Schelling as revealed in his 1912 thesis, is that of the principle of identity. In discussing Kant and his influence on Schelling he makes it very clear it is in the area of aesthetic judgment human reason virtually takes over all aspects of the personality, the logos becomes the key to the structuring of the self.

Reason as the structure of mind and reality is actual in the processes of being, existence, and life. Being is finite, existence is self-contradictory, and life is ambiguous. Actual reason participates in these characteristics of reality. Actual reason moves through finite categories, through self-destructive conflicts, through ambiguities, and through the quest for what is unambiguous, beyond conflict, and beyond bondage to the categories. . . The structure of this finitude is described in the most profound and comprehensive way in Kant's 'critiques'. The categories of experience are categories of finitude. They do not enable human reason to grasp reality-in-itself; but they do enable man to grasp his world, the totality of the phenomena which appear to him and which constitute his actual experience.<sup>8</sup>

In a footnote on the same page he points out:

Kant is more than this. His doctrine of the categories is a doctrine of human finitude. His doctrine of the categorical imperative is a doctrine of the unconditional element in the depth of practical reason. His doctrine of the teleological principle in art and nature enlarges the concept of reason beyond its cognitive-technical sense toward what we have called 'ontological reason'.<sup>9</sup>

Tillich goes on to suggest that after Kant the doctrine of finitude was sadly neglected leading to the enthronement of reason in a deification or idolization as it were by Hegel which was rightly rejected. But "the baby went out with the bathwater" and technical reason was left without the depth of the universal dimension of 'ontological reason'. What he means

by the term "ontological reason" is seen in his definition of "subjective reason":

Subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of reality (in whatever way this correspondence may be explained). The description of 'grasping' and 'shaping' in this definition is based on the fact that subjective reason always is actualized in an individual self which is related to its environment and to its world in terms of reception and reaction. The mind receives and reacts. In receiving reasonably, the mind grasps its world; in reacting reasonably, the mind shapes its world. 'Grasping' in this context, has the connotation of penetrating into the depth, into the essential nature of a thing or an event, of understanding and expressing it. 'Shaping', in this context, has the connotation of transforming a given material into a Gestalt, a living structure which has the power of being. . .

Subjective reason is the rational structure of the mind, while objective reason is the rational structure of reality which the mind can grasp and according to which it can shape reality. Reason in the philosopher grasps the reason in nature. Reason in the artist grasps the meaning of things. Reason in the legislator shapes society according to the structures of social balance. Reason in the leaders of a community shapes communal life according to the structure of organic interdependence. Subjective reason is rational if, in the twofold process of reception and reaction, it expresses the rational structure of reality.<sup>10</sup>

Tillich proceeds to explore the source of the creative impulse in human personality and at the same time to relate it to its potential universal incidence. Since he is dependent upon the aesthetic philosophy of Kant and Schelling, he struggles with this relationship, trying to widen its base of application. It is one thing for a man to have a creative experience; it is another for this to be a universal principle. But he tries to relate the actual experience to a universal realm of values and meaning without which there can be no value, meaning, future, goals, or purpose for human life. There is a difference in the contribution of philosophy and theology in the 'grasping' and 'shaping' function here.

In the final analysis it is meaning and value which beckon life, which define purposes and instill in man the power 'to be'. With this broadened interpretation of man's 'shaping' function, one decries what lies behind Tillich's differentiation of philosophy and theology. 'Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself.' (S.T. I p. 22). . . Theology is involvement with value, it is passion, it is 'ultimate concern'. Examination of Tillich's 'two formal criteria of theology' (ibid. p. 11-15) helps chart the universal basis of 'religion'. Amidst all the manifold concerns and purposes of men, there must be for every man an ultimate concern, a value sought, in part realized, that determines his 'being or not being'. All men who choose to live, who address themselves to tomorrow, are religious and theological in this degree. (S.T. I p. 24-25). Though himself convinced that being-itself, the ground and power of being, God, should be the final, conscious focus of man's ultimate concern, (ibid. p. 273), Tillich, in his definition of faith, allows for less, because he sees in being-itself an active power upholding all things and transcendently directing them - in their freedom - to an ultimate end. God, Tillich declares, is no spectator (cf. ibid. p. 266).<sup>11</sup>

### Footnotes to Chapter 2

1. Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation (New York: Meridian Books 1956 reprint of the 1932 translation by H. Richard Niebuhr) p. 81
2. The 1912 dissertation was published in German as "Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schelling's philosophischer Entwicklung", in Beiträge zur Förderung Christlicher Theologie, Vol. XVI (Gutersloh, Bertelsmann, 1912).
3. David Hopper translates this passage from Gesammelte Werke, Vol. I, p. 17 in Tillich: a Theological Portrait, p. 106
4. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) Vol. I, p. 233
5. Ibid., Vol. III (1963), p. 36
6. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 243
7. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 243
8. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 81-82
9. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 81-82
10. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 76-78 cf. the comment of David Hopper who argues that man's grasping-shaping function as Tillich conceives it is in fact the key to his whole system of thought and methodology (Tillich: a Theological Portrait, New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1968, p. 144, 145):

In the designation of man's 'grasping' and 'shaping' function, we are actually brought to the heart of Tillich's thought, both early and late. Tillich's ontological concerns - the separation of subject and object, the one and the many, freedom and destiny, - find final resolution within a 'creative process' rooted in an eternal 'ground and power of being' inexhaustible in potentiality. For man to create is for man to transcend the subject-object cleavage through a re-ordering of objects and ideas into new patterns of meaning - and this on the basis of freedom. To create is to introduce unities within previously existing multiplicities. As Tillich states it: 'Every aesthetic image or cognitive concept is . . . a structured whole. Ideally, the mind drives toward an image that embraces all images and a concept that contains all concepts, but in reality the universe never appears in a direct vision - it only shines through particular images and concepts.' (S.T. III p. 62). Man in his finitude cannot create a final synthesis, he cannot transcend absolutely the subject-object and the one-many dichotomies, but in his finite creations the creative ground of all being can be manifested. . .

From this key point access is had to virtually all avenues of Tillich's thought.

11. David Hopper, Tillich: a Theological Portrait, (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1968) p. 155, 156



### "The Protestant Era" (1948)

Not only does Tillich uphold an interest in an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the whole of life and human experience, but his own life and activities have borne out such a position. He is a philosopher and a theologian, with a great interest in psychology and sociology as well as in history and politics. This interest in the events of his own time led to his participation in the Religious-Socialist movement which tried to provide a religious interpretation of history in the light of the kairos doctrine and the Protestant principle that he enunciated.

Religious socialism was always interested in human life as a whole and never in its economic basis exclusively. In this it was sharply distinguished from economic materialism, as well as from all forms of 'economism'. It did not consider the economic factor as an independent one on which all social reality is dependent. It recognized the dependence of economy itself on all other social, intellectual, and spiritual factors, and it created a picture of the total, interdependent structure of our present existence. We understood socialism as a problem not of wages but of a new theonomy in which the question of wages, of social security, is treated in unity with the question of truth, of spiritual security. . . My entrance into the religious-socialist movement meant for me the definitive break with philosophical idealism and theological transcendentalism.<sup>1</sup>

His 1948 publication of "The Protestant Era", which was a collection of his writings covering a period of two decades put together in book form around the central theme of expounding the Protestant principle, centres around the relationships of three main concepts. These are "theonomy", "Kairos", and "demonic". These three taken together are intended to provide the key to understanding the Protestant meaning of history. By "theonomy" Tillich understands the substance of religion and culture which he sees as continuous: "Religion is the substance of culture, culture is the expression of religion."<sup>2</sup> By "kairos" he refers to the "moment in which the eternal breaks into the temporal, and the temporal is prepared to receive

it."<sup>3</sup> By "demonic" he explains, "The idea of the demonic is the mythical expression of a reality that was in the centre of Luther's experience as it was in Paul's, namely, the structural, and therefore inescapable, power of evil."<sup>4</sup> The aim of the divine kairos, breaking into history and establishing the theonomous culture, is to conquer the limitations of the demonic and through the establishment of the divine structure produce the "Gestalt of grace." This is, in other words, the Protestant principle in history.

This theme is central to his understanding of his own life and times, and was the inspiration behind his involvement in Religious-Socialism<sup>5</sup> with several other corollaries. This theme is developed in a chapter on sacramental thinking, with a romantic stress on the place of Nature as the context of religious meaning in life. His view of Christ is seen in this light as the basic sacramental reality, the New Being, through whom the "Gestalt of grace" is seen in a unique way. And in this context is set the chapter "The Idea and the Ideal of Personality" in which,

the relation of the personal centre, first, to nature, second, to community, and third, to its own unconscious basis is discussed, and the ideas for the transformation of these relations in the coming period of history are suggested.<sup>6</sup>

Finally a further application of the Protestant principle is to induce theologians to reexamine the Scriptures, "as the original document of the event which is called 'Jesus the Christ' . . . the manifestation of the Protestant principle."<sup>7</sup>

In the chapter entitled, "The Idea and the Ideal of Personality". Tillich gives us some important definitions as a clue to his understanding of the human Self, which definitions are set out like propositions:

Personality is that being which has power over itself.<sup>8</sup>

Personality is that being which has the power of self-determination, or which is free: for to be free means to have the power over one's self, not to be bound to one's given nature.<sup>8</sup>

Personality can also be defined as that individual being which is able to reach universality. Freedom is the power of transcending one's own given nature: but it would not be real freedom if the individual merely exchanged its peculiar nature for another one . . . but loss of one's self.<sup>9</sup>

Personality and world may be understood as correlative concepts. . . Through confronting the macrocosm, the personal self becomes aware of its own character as a cosmos, and by being a microcosm the personal self is able to apprehend the macrocosm, the world as world. Human freedom is a function of this structural interdependence of self and world, of microcosm and macrocosm.<sup>10</sup>

Personality, the possession of control over one's self, is rooted in the structure of being as being. The depth of reality is freedom, the ultimate power of being is power over itself. And the individual personality is the place within the whole of being where this becomes manifest and actual. The unconditional character of the demand to become personal is the ethical expression of the ontological structure of being itself. This is the religious foundation of the idea of personality.<sup>11</sup>

The experience of the ultimate power and meaning of the personal is expressed in myth and dogma whenever they symbolize the unconditional, the ground and abyss of all beings in personalistic terms . . . The danger of the personal symbol is only that its symbolic character may be forgotten and that a judgment about the depth and meaning of reality may be transformed into a judgment about a special being beside or above us . . . it becomes an idol.<sup>12</sup>

With this series of propositions Tillich fills out his idea of selfhood as self-powered, self-determined, self-transcending, self-contained, and self-realizing personality, focused in a free microcosm of being and existing in polar relation to the macrocosmic ground of all being.

This idea of selfhood reflects his basic ontological presuppositions, but Tillich here is leaving himself open for the criticism of not doing justice to the idea of "personality" either philosophically or psychologically. In other words he is fitting selfhood into his ontological

system, not building his system upon the basis of experience and investigation. The propositions above outline the way Tillich conceives of his systematic formulation taking shape in personality, rather than how personality is experienced existentially in all its perplexity and contradictions. He tends toward the approach of the idealist not of the existentialist.

As for his first proposition, it would apply in a general way to anything in the animal kingdom, since power might be interpreted in many ways, beginning with "self-automated". It might be as general as the life principle itself.

His second proposition concerning freedom again might be interpreted in a general way referring to anything in its natural state, where freedom can be expressed. Yet this does not take into account the limits placed upon freedom even for the purpose of co-existence in this world, let alone other limits of mind, opportunity, or of body. Is this freedom?

His third proposition represents a shift in ground from the first two, which were dealing with the idea of the creaturely Will both in forms of ability and in freedom. Depending on whether reason or spirit is in view, this self-transcendence will either take the form of a mental apprehension of universality or it will be a spiritual or mystical experience. He doesn't say. Apparently it is more than just an unconscious ontological relation that he has in view by this self-transcendence.

The remaining propositions are, however, the basic ones as far as Tillich is concerned, since they set out the real point that he is making concerning his understanding of the relation of particular individuals to being itself. And since they are tied so closely to his ontology, they stand little chance of being generally accepted apart from that frame of reference. Again the terms used are capable of several interpretations, but he is quite specific



in defining these in the way he is using them.

But taking these propositions together it becomes clear that this essay in this collection does not try to give a full definition of personality after all, but only to show how the particular idea that Tillich is advancing can be fitted into his system of thought. He leaves too much unexplored to be a full definition. Rather it is an approach to the idea of personality within a certain perspective; i.e., his ontological understanding as it pertains to the principle of theonomy in an expansion of the Protestant principle in history. Seen in this light we can appreciate what he is trying to do, even if the language used suggests that he has in fact done more: "Having established and interpreted the idea of personality in its different implications,"<sup>12</sup> is how he puts it. Perhaps his first book in English should be excused for a distinctly German turn of phrase.

At this point he goes on to contrast sharply the idea of personality with the ideal of personality. The idea is as he has defined it in the propositions above, whereby the personality is in a self-conscious relation with the unconditioned ground of its being; whereas the ideal is the development of the individual at the expense of a relationship with the eternal dimension. He examines this contrast in a number of relationships: personality and things, personality and community, and personality and soul (which he points out is the fundamental one).

With regard to things, the ideal of personality seeks to objectify all things over against the personality which tends to control things. In this way the true relationship, according to Tillich, is disrupted and the created order is violated. The idea of personality, on the other hand, sees all things as symbols of the ground of all being and enjoys a sense of related harmony and unity in the created order through which a true fulfilment of reality



can be appreciated. Things are sacramental.

With regard to community, the basis of relationship with others can be seen either as one of competition and power, or as one of brotherhood. The ideal of personality seeks to develop the individual at the expense of others, making relationship difficult, distorted, or impossible. The idea of personality, on the other hand, rests on the fulfilment of the "I-Thou" relationship in depth realizing the social dimensions of the ground of all being in and through true humanism and culture. This is the basic philosophy behind Religious-Socialism in personal terms.

With regard to the soul, Tillich examines the relationship between the personality and individualism, contrasting the ideal and the idea again.

We shall define 'soul' in this context as the vital and emotional ground from which the self-conscious centre of personality arises. The body, of course, is included in this definition in so far as the body is the immediate expression and the form of the self-realization of the soul. The relation of the conscious centre to psychic foundation of the personality corresponds to the inter-relation of the personality with things and community.<sup>13</sup>

Tillich then makes an historic study of the increased incidence of repression as the symptom of the idealized personality which loses its vital power as it is increasingly subjected to rationalization and intellectualization through the process of individualization. He says that at the Reformation the Church and society together imposed new laws or standards on people.

This created a repression of vital forces which was very successful in the beginning. But the repression was always partially opposed, and it became more and more untenable until it finally broke down in the first decades of the twentieth century. The disintegration of the consciousness-centred personality is now proceeding on a terrifying scale. . . . Freudian and the other schools of depth psychology brought to light the mechanisms of repression in the bourgeois Protestant personality and the explosive re-emergence of the vital (unconscious) forces.<sup>14</sup>

This is the contradiction of the ideal of personality. Tillich points out that the so-called "religious personality" is the ultimate form that this ideal assumes. But since the ideal religious personality is trying to make the person conform to an imposed standard, grace itself and the growth of the soul is repressed and denied. "This", says Tillich, "is the decisive criticism of the 'ideal of personality'".<sup>15</sup>

What is the answer? How does the psychic foundation of the personality develop in a full and creative way? Tillich uses the incident of the healing of the demoniac by Jesus as the key to a new form of personal life:

But Jesus and his disciples and followers did not overcome the stage of possession by proclaiming the ideal of personality but by embodying a 'constructive structure', originating in the divine ground, that is, in grace. Grace is, so to speak, the 'possession from above', overcoming the possession from below. While the latter destroys the personal centre through the invasion of 'darkness', the former re-establishes it by elevating the creative power of the ground into the unity of a personal life. Every personality stands between possession and grace, susceptible to both. Personality is the open arena of the struggle between them.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter in the "Protestant Era", a book which covered two decades of his thought and emphasis on the spiritual-historical situation, does serve to show how the shift in Tillich's thinking during the 1940's began to focus on the individual without revising his ontology. From this point on his emphasis on the New Being further develops his ideas of the soul and personality. This interest, coming at a time when he was admittedly influenced by existentialist writers, when the rapid growth and influence of the social sciences (including depth psychology) was felt in all disciplines especially theology, and also at the same time as the revival of Biblical theology, led to Tillich further adding to his understanding of personal selfhood by developing his thinking in this direction.

Footnotes to Chapter 3

1. Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, (Chicago: Phoenix Books 1957 ed. originally published 1948) Introduction p. xiv
2. Ibid., p. xiii
3. Ibid., p. xv
4. Ibid., p. xvi
5. Ibid., p. xvii      cf. p. xiii
6. Ibid., p. xx
7. Ibid., p. xxiii, xxiv
8. Ibid., p. 115
9. Ibid., p. 116
10. Ibid., p. 117
11. Ibid., p. 118
12. Ibid., p. 119
13. Ibid., p. 131
14. Ibid., p. 133
15. Ibid., p. 135
16. Ibid., p. 134

## "Existential Philosophy" (1944)

Tillich developed his ideas over against the ontological frame of reference that he had accepted from the "positive philosophy" of Schelling. He regarded Schelling as a precursor or bridge standing between the idealism of the nineteenth century and the existential philosophy of the twentieth. In his 1944 essay, "Existential Philosophy: Its Historical Meaning", Tillich traces the historical linkage and sets out the modern problems as he sees them. In many ways this essay is biographical, setting out the way his own thinking developed.

The distinctive way of philosophizing which today calls itself Existenzphilosophie or 'Existential philosophy' emerged as one of the major currents of German thought under the Weimar Republic counting among its leaders such men as Heidegger and Jaspers. But its history goes back at least a century, to the decade of the 1840's, when its main contentions were formulated by thinkers like Schelling, Kierkegaard, and Marx, in sharp criticism of the reigning 'rationalism' or panlogism of the Hegelians; and in the next generation Nietzsche and Dilthey were among its protagonists.

Existential philosophy thus seems a specifically German creation. It sprang originally from the tensions of the German intellectual situation in the early nineteenth century. It has been strongly influenced by the political and spiritual catastrophes of the Germans in our own generation.

Tillich refers to several lectures and books produced between 1840 and 1850 by Schelling, Feuerbach, Marx, Stirner, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, as examples of the way existential thinking was developing. He points out that Schelling linked his "positive philosophy" as he called it to earlier thinkers including Pascal, Jacobi, Hamann, Fichte, Kant and right back to Plato, in an attempt to show that the problem of existence runs right through the history of philosophy. Unfortunately the impetus of this movement in the 1840's was "disregarded to the popularity" of the Neo-Kantian



idealism or naturalistic empiricism. Then in the 1880's Nietzsche and Dilthey again focused on existence. And men like Bergson and William James followed similar lines of thought.

The works of these early thinkers have been rediscovered in the twentieth century and developed by thinkers like Heidegger and Jaspers. Kierkegaard and Marx have come into their own. And movements like the Religious-Socialism school have tried to give an existential interpretation to history. Tillich calls this last group the third stage or period. He then offers a comparison of certain ideas: methods, ontological problems, ethical attitudes, and draws his conclusions about their significance.

In his examination of the methodological foundations of the existential philosophy, Tillich begins by examining the distinction between essence and existence in the history of philosophy, showing that the two are held together in the scholastics' concept of the Unconditioned Absolute, but in Kant and Hegel essence is given priority absorbing existence. In the 1840's the attempt was made to destroy this Hegelian all-embracing system of conceptualizing everything, including existence. Kierkegaard is quoted as saying, "Pure thought is a recent invention and a 'lunatic postulate'. The negation of a preceding synthesis requires time. But time cannot find a place in pure thought."<sup>2</sup>

Tillich points out that reason can only deal with possibility, whereas existence is the realm of actuality.

Only in the aesthetic attitude - in Kierkegaard's psychology, the attitude of detachment - can we be related to 'essence', the realm of possibility. In the aesthetic attitude, which includes the merely cognitive, there are always many possibilities, and in it no 'decision' is demanded: in the ethical attitude a personal decision must always be made.<sup>3</sup>

The problem of philosophy is how to deal with reality. Since existence can-



not be approached rationally it must be approached empirically.

All of the philosophers of Existence approached reality experimentally, focusing on the immediate inner personal experience of the subject. Then on the basis of this personal experience, each developed a theory.

Thus for Schelling the approach to Existence is through the immediate personal experience of the Christian, the traditional faith - although rationally interpreted. For Kierkegaard it is the immediate personal experience of the individual in the face of eternity, his personal faith - although interpreted by a most refined dialectical reasoning. For Feuerbach it is the experience of man as man in his sense-existence - although developed into a doctrine of Man. For Marx it is the experience of socially determined man, his Existence as a member of a social class - though interpreted in terms of a universal socio-economic theory. For Nietzsche it is the experience of a biologically determined being, his Existence as an embodiment of the Will to Power - although expressed in a metaphysics of Life. For Bergson it is the experience of dynamic vitality, man's Existence as duration and creativity - although expressed in words taken from the realm of non-existential space. For Dilthey it is the experience of the intellectual life, man's Existence in a special cultural situation - although explained in a universal Geistesphilosophie. For Jaspers it is the experience of the inner activity of the Self, man's Existence as 'self-transcendence' - although described in terms of an immanent psychology. For Heidegger it is the experience of that kind of being who is 'concerned' with Being, with his Existence as care, anxiety, and resoluteness - although Heidegger claims to describe the structure of Being itself. For the Religious Socialist it is the immediate personal experience of man's historical Existence, the pregnant historical moment - although expressed in a general interpretation of history.<sup>4</sup>

Tillich points out that because of this approach to reality through personal experience, the existentialist thinkers have to use indirect means of communication since their pupils can only think out of experience. This problem of personal or non-objective thinking poses many difficulties.

It is significant to note the links he includes in the chain of thinkers between Schelling and himself (the exponent of the Religious Socialist school), and how he sees himself related to the philosophers of existence, differing in method and approach but having much in common. He

then turns to a consideration of ontological problems faced by the existentialists.

Since he is dealing with existence, the existentialist thinker tries to avoid the distinction between subject and object and deal with experience.

Like many other appeals to immediate experience, it is trying to find a level on which the contrast between 'subject' and 'object' has not arisen. It aims to cut under the 'subject-object distinction' and to reach that stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, calls the 'Ursprung' or 'Source'. But in order to penetrate to this stratum we must leave the sphere of 'objective' things and pass through the corresponding 'subjective' inner experience, until we arrive at the immediate creative experience or 'Source'.<sup>5</sup>

In order to provide a special vehicle to describe this immediate personal experience, in such a way as to avoid transforming humans into objects on the one hand, and on the other lapsing into subjective terminology, psychological concepts are employed by existentialist thinkers. However these concepts are redefined with a non-psychological connotation in an attempt to describe the structure of Being itself. These terms are not exactly definitive, but must be understood to be half-symbolic and half-realistic approximations, part of the problem of indirectness in communication. But this does leave the persistent problem of distinguishing ontological concepts from the psychological and Heidegger for one admits that he was unable to do this clearly. Tillich points out that in many places, including Schelling's "Human Freedom",

we find the belief in an essential relationship between human nature and Being, the belief that the innermost center of Nature lies in the heart of man. An especially important example of this ontological use of a psychological term is the conception of 'Will' as the ultimate principle of Being.<sup>6</sup>

In seeking to understand this ontological use of terms like "Will", "Will to Power", "Unconscious", for example, Tillich points out that in

order to get behind the objective world, as it were, this raises the problem of the relationship between the finite and the infinite. According to idealist thinking the finite is identified with the infinite as essentially one and the same. According to mystical thinking the difference is temporarily overcome. But in existential thinking the difference is reestablished. He quotes Kierkegaard as saying, "Existence is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite," then he underlines that a synthesis is the opposite of identity as it rather establishes the difference first of all. This implies that man's finitude is "the very structure of the human mind", to be accepted not faulted as shortcomings, error, or sinfulness.

This acceptance of finitude is necessary to an understanding of man, for as Tillich points out, it is through finitude that man finds his centre:

An ontological doctrine of man develops the structure of finitude as man finds it in himself as the center of his own personal Existence. He alone of all finite beings is aware of his own finitude; therefore the way to ontology passes through the doctrine of man. But of course, in traveling this way he cannot escape his finitude. The way to finitude is itself finite and cannot claim finality; such is the limit set upon the Existential thinker.

Tillich then goes on to show that the discussion of finitude leads to an analysis of Time. Existence is distinguished from essence by its temporal character, although this character has been analyzed in many ways by the various existential thinkers. Immediately experienced Time with its personal meaning as it is experienced must be distinguished from the timelessness of essentialist thinking, and also from the objectively measured Time of scientific thinking. Existential or qualitative Time is described in various ways, but many have some idea of a "pregnant moment" of great import in personal experience (as Kierkegaard), or in history (as Religious Socialism).

Existential Time places a man in history, related to the past, acting



in the present, but directed towards the future. To understand human nature it is necessary to consider this historical dimension to life and to see that a man relates to life meaningfully in time. This is the only way he can find meaning, purpose, and community for himself.

Since Tillich has examined a large group of "Existential" philosophers covering a period of over one hundred years, his own position and interests become apparent. He points out in his conclusion that the group he has selected are "existential" philosophers only in certain areas of their thought and concern, some almost incidentally, but their ideas arise out of a common situation in European history over the last century. All oppose the dehumanizing effects of mechanism, rationalism, secularized humanism, and institutionalized religion. All attempt to discover "Reality as men experience it immediately in their actual living . . . . to discover the creative realm of being which is prior to and beyond the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity."<sup>8</sup> This is his own concern which he puts this way: "the essence of objectivity could be found in the depth of subjectivity - in which God could be best approached through the soul."<sup>8</sup>

In another essay, written in 1955, entitled "The Theological Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis", he acknowledges his debt to the Existentialist thinkers as far as his own position is concerned:

Existentialism is now taken in a much broader sense than it was a few years after the Second World War. At that time existentialism was identified with the philosophy of Sartre. But existentialism appears in decisive forms early in the 17th and in the 19th centuries, and it is incorporated in almost all great creations in all areas of life in the 20th century. If you understand existentialism in this broader sense, it suggests very definitely a relationship between existentialism and psychoanalysis. A basic assertion to be made about the relationship of theology and psychoanalysis is that psychoanalysis belongs fundamentally to the whole existentialist movement of the 20th century, and that as a part of this movement it must be

understood in its relationship to theology in the same way in which the relationship of existentialism generally must be understood.<sup>9</sup>

For Tillich there is no distinction between theology and philosophy to all intents and purposes since both are ways of interpreting the vast range of human existential experience. He sees psychoanalysis as well as other disciplines simply as tools in a common task.

It is then possible to disregard those people who tell us to stay in this or that field: here a system of theological doctrines and there congeries of psychological insights. This is not so. The relationship is not one of existing alongside each other; it is a relationship of mutual interpenetration.<sup>10</sup>

He goes on to say that many people in different ways, in philosophy, and art, and science, and religion, and others too all try to stress the study of life itself rather than man's thoughts about many things. He shows that in all ages, certainly from the time of the Reformation, this existential search has gone on, but now is greatly aided by Freud:

All the things which is these men were ontological intuition or theological analysis now through Freud became methodological scientific words. Freud, in his discovery of the unconscious, rediscovered something that was known long before, and had been used for many decades and even centuries to fight the victorious philosophy of consciousness. What Freud did was to give to this protest a scientific methodological foundation. In him we must see the old protest against the philosophy of consciousness.<sup>11</sup>

J. H. Thomas sums up his orientation to life and thought briefly, showing how he was influenced greatly by his time and teachers:

Life in Berlin did not encourage this romantic strain, though the influence of his parents' strong personalities tended to increase the pressure of the sociological and psychological restrictions of his early life. Consequently Tillich soon realized that the balance of the romantic and revolutionary motives was one of the basic problems of his thought and life. The same kind of tension was produced by the intellectual forces which influenced him during his university careers. The decisive lesson he learned was that the Protestant theology far from being stagnant was able to incorporate strictly scientific methods without losing its Christian foundations



The other dynamic influence was that of Kierkegaard whom Tillich discovered during this period.

Kierkegaard's dialectic shook but did not break Tillich's nineteenth-century conservatism. And despite the impact of both Biblical Criticism and of Kierkegaard, Tillich and his contemporaries still hoped that the great synthesis between Christianity and humanism could be achieved with the help of German classical philosophy. This is not to say, however, that Kierkegaard's influence on Tillich has been negligible; for it is easy enough to show the Kierkegaardian origin of much of his thought. What it does mean is that Kierkegaard's thought remained for Tillich in a very real sense enclosed in its nineteenth-century expression. It is significant that he regards the philosophy of Schelling's second period as being the beginning of Existentialism. . . . For Tillich Kierkegaard does not represent a new force in philosophy but the continuation of the kind of break with Hegel which had been effected in Schelling's 'positive philosophy'.

One final point on this subject must be mentioned. In so far as Tillich can be said to be in the 'existentialist' tradition he must also reflect the influence of Husserl whose phenomenological philosophy forms the link between Kierkegaard and contemporary philosophy. The popularity of this philosophical school in Germany a generation ago makes it extremely probable that this was the kind of philosophy Tillich was taught. In which case the influence of Husserl came from two directions.

When we consider Tillich's biography here along with his essays on existentialist thinkers, we can see that he is using the terms "existentialist" and "existentialism" in ways that are peculiarly his own. In one way he uses the term in a restricted way, since it reflects the background of nineteenth-century thinking and therefore is rather undeveloped in the light of subsequent usage. But this is also rather unrestricted, since it opens the door to unwarranted generalities which result almost in a tautology. In order to understand the meaning (and meanings) he attaches to these terms we must see how he uses the words and whose philosophy he indicates on his list.

From the essays it is apparent that Tillich is using the term "existentialist" to apply to any thinker who deals with human problems of existence in the broadest sense of the term. By pointing out the diversity

among the "philosophers of existence" as he calls them, including Plato and Kant, he argues for this broader understanding which includes the whole of the psychoanalytic school as well as the literary and artistic ethos of our century. By such an all-embracing approach, he certainly includes himself, but he also makes it much more obscure as to his exact position. He seems to argue that he has learned much from the "existentialists" he cites and in a general sense would be one with them. He does, however, leave room for his own developing system of thought, especially his ontological investigations, to go beyond any strict definition of "existentialists" which might be identified with the position of Jaspers, Heidegger, or Sartre, for example. In that he commits himself to an approach which begins with the doctrine of Man based on human experience - approaching God through the human soul - he would be forced to accept the term "existentialist" in a narrower sense when speaking of this approach, although he would not be comfortable with the term as a blanket category for all his thinking.

Tillich is not alone in resisting the "existentialist" label. Heidegger, Marcel, Jaspers and others have all repudiated the label although they are still classified as existentialist thinkers by most philosophers and historians. Perhaps it is because it is so inexact a description, or perhaps it is because of the diversity of approaches within the category, that the confusion exists. Tillich's method of trying to sort out the range of approach of several thinkers is a common and necessary exercise in tackling the problem. But each author selects his own list to suit his own ends. Tillich's inclusion of Plato, Kant, Schelling, Marx, Bergson, Freud and Religious Socialism opens the door to the broadest possible interpretation of what existentialism includes both in philosophy and beyond to other disciplines, indeed extending to the whole of human experience. The problem of

time, and history requires the setting of bounds, but there is tremendous variation in the ways those bounds can be set. The problem of understanding ontology raises both the question of the existential boundaries and the question of when those limits are passed over and the discussion is no longer "existential" in nature.

Tillich's reference to Religious Socialism in his list of existential thinkers apparently is an attempt to contrast his own position with that of the others. The distinctive he claims is "the immediate personal experience of man's historical Existence, the pregnant historical moment . . ."<sup>4</sup> Put this way, his position is indeed a narrow and specific definition of "existentialist". If his further discussion of finitude, time, and history is consistent with this understanding, as we have seen it certainly was in his earlier period as reflected in "The Protestant Era" which spanned twenty years, then it becomes clear that Tillich uses the term in both a general sense and in this concrete specific sense.

The confusion in terms seems to arise when he goes on to discuss ontology. In many ways his position in this great search is very similar to that of Heidegger, not just that they share a common goal and concern. Both Heidegger and Tillich were trained in classical philosophy and both carried forward many basic concepts they learned from Aristotle and Plato respectively with respect to ontology. For Heidegger, the basic question is not knowledge about the empirical world that is important, but the way we are in relation to the world affords us direct knowledge of the being which is in us, in the world, and is manifested in the way we relate to Being-itself. Abstraction is to be abhorred; involvement in existence includes caring in history. For Tillich, abstraction is not to be abhorred but rather is the goal of our ontological understanding arrived at through our prior knowledge of our



self in the midst of the human condition which imposes limitations upon us. The basic ground of unity is Being-itself which includes both finite man and infinite absolute Being. The rise to ontological understanding is by way of self-transcendence. Yet since both Heidegger and Tillich follow the pathway to Being-itself by way of an examination of the existential life of man, there are similarities in the way they use terms and discuss ontology.

This ontological understanding of "existentialism" is different again from that specific understanding set forth in Religious Socialist terminology. Ontology introduced abstract concepts of being and Being and the term "existential" stands in contrast to this ontology which might better be described as "essentialist". For Tillich the ground of unity, Being-itself, holds together both Existence and Essence.

Footnotes to Chapter 4

1. Paul Tillich, The Theology of Culture, (New York: Oxford U. Press 1959) p. 76. In this anthology a number of previously published articles were reprinted, including the essay "Existential Philosophy: Its Historical Meaning", originally published in Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. I, 1 (January 1944)
2. Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript (trans Lowrie, Princeton 1941) p. 279
3. The Theology of Culture, p. 85
4. Ibid., p. 87, 88
5. Ibid., p. 92
6. Ibid., p. 95
7. Ibid., p. 98
8. Ibid., p. 107
9. Ibid., p. 113
10. Ibid., p. 114
11. Ibid., p. 116, 117
12. J. H. Thomas, Paul Tillich: An Appraisal, (London: S.C.M. 1963) p. 16, 17



## THE HUMAN SITUATION

Tillich's interest in the existentialists and his appreciation of the tremendous contribution of the psychoanalytic school of psychotherapy led him to take the stance of an existentialist in probing the human situation. He wrestled with the fallenness of man in his alienation and estrangement in all its dimensions, with anxiety and courage, and with faith in God. His sermons and popular writings reflect this on-going concern. Then he incorporates his insights into his Systematics in a more formal manner. The importance of these existential concerns cannot be overrated in their influence upon Tillich since he does not live and write in an ivory tower. In his lectures he is recorded to have made the following comment:

This discovery of existentialism has a great significance for theology. It has seen the dark elements in man as over against a philosophy of consciousness which lays all the stress on man's conscious decisions and good will. The existentialists allied themselves with Freud's analysis of the unconscious in protest against a psychology of consciousness which had previously existed. Existentialism and psychotherapeutic psychology are natural allies and have always worked together. This rediscovery of the unconscious in man is of the highest importance for theology. It has changed the moralistic and idealistic types which we have discussed; it has placed the question of the human condition at the center of all theological thinking, and for this reason it has made the answers meaningful again. In this light we can say that existentialism and Freud, together with his followers and friends, have become the providential allies of Christian theology in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

In a broad sense Tillich can be called an Augustinian theologian in his understanding of the fallenness of the human situation. He differs from existentialist theologians of the past who have attempted to ignore the realities of sin and unbelief, or at least to treat them less seriously. He is enough of an existentialist to hold to the radical nature of the fall. In Volume II of the Systematics,<sup>2</sup> Tillich begins with an analysis of the existential condition of creaturely existence living in the power of being



which is derived from being-itself. In this power, life can be affirmed over against nonbeing. Man, however, is a self-conscious being, a completely centered self, and in the struggle to assert self-consciousness over against nonbeing this resistance is translated into a resistance against the ground of being-itself. Both being-itself and nonbeing are resisted as threats to the centered self without properly distinguishing the two. This is possible because of the element of freedom, albeit a finite and relative freedom. Man uses his freedom to oppose the source and ground of his life and freedom. Hence it is through his freedom that man finds himself isolated and afraid.

Tillich's analysis of this condition is that in freedom man denies his finitude, yet because he is aware of finitude impinging upon him, limiting him in so many ways, forcing him to accept his present and ultimate limits in terms of his personality and his experience in the world, he becomes anxiety-ridden. His attempt to live an independent existence heightens his anxiety since it is a fundamental denial of his self-centeredness. This anxiety is of several separate types, each affecting different levels of his personality, but ultimately ontological anxiety in the face of nonbeing, death, faces every man. For Tillich this constitutes a basic defiance of the Absolute. Such autonomy of the self in its struggle for complete independence, disregarding the limitations set by human finitude, is sin.

In estrangement, man is outside the divine center to which his own center essentially belongs. He is the center of himself and of his world. The possibility of leaving his essential center - and, with this possibility, the temptation - is given because structurally he is the only fully centered being. He alone has not only consciousness (which is a high, but incomplete, centeredness) but selfconsciousness or complete centeredness. This structural centeredness gives man his greatness, dignity, and being, the 'image of God'. It indicates his ability to transcend both himself and his world, to look at both, and to see himself in perspective as the center in which all parts of his world converge. To be a self and to have a world constitute the challenge to man as the perfection of creation. But this

perfection is, at the same time, his temptation. Man is tempted to make himself existentially the center of himself and his world. When looking at himself and his world, he realizes his freedom and, with it, his potential infinity. He realizes that he is not bound to any special situation or element in it. But, at the same time, he knows that he is finite. . .

The word hubris cannot be adequately translated, although the reality to which it points is described not only in Greek tragedy but also in the Old Testament. It is most distinctly expressed in the serpent's promise to Eve that eating from the tree of knowledge will make man equal to God. Hubris is the self-elevation of man into the sphere of the divine.

Hubris is not one form of sin beside others. It is sin in its total form, namely, the other side of unbelief or man's turning away from the divine center to which he belongs. It is turning toward one's self as the center of one's self and one's world. This turning toward one's self is not an act done by a special part of man, such as his spirit. Man's whole life, including his sensual life, is spiritual. And it is in the totality of his personal being that man makes himself the center of his world. . . Its main symptom is that man does not acknowledge his finitude.<sup>3</sup>

The self-contradiction of hubris leads to the destruction of selfhood and estrangement from God as "existential finitude". Since each of the basic expressions of man's existential state (unbelief, hubris, and concupiscence) contradicts man's essential being, it drives the polar elements of this being into conflict with each other. This he calls the "structure of estrangement".<sup>4</sup>

Here Tillich in his analysis of existential estrangement in the human situation takes material which reflects his existential concern for the great contradictions in human life and includes them in his framework of thought which is expressed in terms of essentialist universals. He does not try to avoid the ambiguities in an attempt to gain a consistent presentation, but rather, he would prefer to leave room for ambiguities as polar extremes within a unifying whole of a category, e.g. "the structure of estrangement" (a novel way of expressing the disruption of fallenness). The existential ambiguities of the Self constantly challenge this method.

Another example of how Tillich seeks to bring together matters of existential concern and include them in his systematic presentation is that of courage and anxiety, which is closely akin to freedom and hubris. We can see this most clearly set forth in his book "The Courage to Be" of 1952.

The existential condition of human life has a greater potential than his analysis of estrangement would indicate. It is only one side of the coin as it were, and Tillich seeks to show how the Self might be transcended, how human personality might be redeemed. Like John Macmurray in his Gifford Lectures,<sup>5</sup> Tillich is concerned to show that the Self is to be conceived in dynamic relationships rather than in static categories. In order to do this the contributions of modern psychological investigations must be taken into account, but at the same time he is concerned to explore the metaphysical implications so that he might systematize his thinking. Consequently, he chose terms which have a philosophical background and yet have not become overloaded with psychological overtones by being put to use in completely different and modern contexts. Calling upon his classical background, he developed the notion of courage.

Courage as the universal and essential self-affirmation of one's being is an ontological concept. The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation. In Plato's Republic courage is related to that element of the soul which is called thymos (the spirited, courageous element), and both are related to that level of society which is called phylakes (guardians). Thymos lies between the intellectual and the sensual element in man. It is the unreflective striving towards what is noble. As such it has a central position in the structure of the soul, it bridges the cleavage between reason and desire. . . . But it is remarkable that Plato saw the thymoeides (middle of man's being) as an essential function of man's being, an ethical and sociological quality. . . . The Greek word for courage, andreia (manliness) and the Latin word fortitudo (strength) indicate the military connotation of courage. As long as the aristocracy was the group which carried arms the aristocratic and the military connotations of courage merged . . . . But the



aristocratic line was revived in the early Middle Ages. Courage became again characteristic of nobility.

Tillich points out in his discussion of Aquinas' use of courage as one of the four cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice) that since Thomas comes down on the primacy of the intellect, then wisdom in fact subordinates the others and leads into static rationalistic thought. Protestants, on the other hand, so emphasized the will that courage became autonomous in effect, subordinating wisdom and justice in activism. The same is true in much of the existentialist thinking which lays much great stress on decisions of the will. The careful background given in researching this term is typical of Tillich's appreciation for history as well as his search for metaphysical roots for his systematic thinking.

He argues that from the times of the ancient Greeks until the Renaissance Stoicism was "the only real alternative to Christianity in the Western world".<sup>7</sup> The Stoical attitude is one of cosmic resignation, while Christianity stands for cosmic salvation. Both require courage. In the Western world both these attitudes can be seen; the Stoical attitude coming out in the renunciation of the world associated with asceticism, and the Christian attitude of faith coming out in world affirmation, in looking to the future and creatively taking a hand in shaping it.

While the ancient world valued the individual not as an individual but as a representative of something universal, e.g., a virtue, the rebirth of antiquity saw the individual as an individual, a unique expression of the universe, incomparable, irreplaceable, and of infinite significance. . . . Modern humanism is still humanism, rejecting the idea of salvation. But modern humanism also rejects renunciation. It replaces it by a kind of self-affirmation which transcends that of the Stoics because it includes the material, historical, and individual existence. Nevertheless, there are so many points in which this modern humanism is identical with ancient Stoicism that it may be called Neo-Stoicism.<sup>8</sup>

He goes on to show that in Spinoza, this Neo-Stoicism finds an exponent and



self-affirmation is seen as participation in divine self-affirmation.

Now self-affirmation does not take place in a vacuum. It is the affirmation of being by the Self over against the existential conditions which threaten being, that is nonbeing. It is a part of the process of living as a creature in this world subject to the limitations of time and space. These limitations form the boundaries for the Self and awareness of them produces anxiety in the person who is thus self-conscious. Since nonbeing is in fact a fear of the unknown it produces anxiety not fear which has an object. Fear can be faced and thus taken into one's self-affirmation with courage, but anxiety lies beyond the boundaries of our finitude.<sup>9</sup> The courage to face anxiety requires us to go beyond our Self.

There are at least three distinguishable types of anxiety for the normal man facing life, according to Tillich. Just as all anxiety is related to the threat of nonbeing as man becomes aware of his finitude, the three types of anxiety are related to three different ways in which a man feels emptiness and loneliness of the loss of meaning in life; and also in terms of feelings of guilt and condemnation. In each of these ways there is sufficient grounds for anxiety of a distinctly different type. Each of these threats to life is a part of the existential reality of normal life. Here Tillich is indebted to the contributions of depth analysis of personality.

The anxiety of death is the threat of extinction. This does not always appear in such a bold form, but may impose itself in terms of the arbitrary hand of fate. It is profoundly disturbing to feel that one is merely a victim of blind forces which affect our lives without respect to anything we have or have not done. Death is the end of this process. Tillich refers to this type of anxiety as that which threatens our "ontic self-affirmation" and it is always present along with other anxieties.

The anxiety of meaninglessness threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation. This refers to the shattering of the structures of life and personality that might be called spiritual emptiness, a sense of isolation and lostness. Meaninglessness and futility is prominent in Western society.

The anxiety of condemnation threatens man's moral self-affirmation. It is true that pathological anxiety rests on subjective guilt, but it is objective guilt that Tillich has in view here as he is speaking of normal existential conditions under awareness of finitude. Man's whole being as a moral creature is at stake. Such awareness might follow an existential moment when remorse brings fresh insight or when the consequences of actions overtake the person. Again all three levels are present together.

In all three forms anxiety is existential in the sense that it belongs to existence as such and not to an abnormal state of mind as in neurotic (and psychotic) anxiety. . . . However, it must be stated that the difference of type does not mean mutual exclusion. . . . the courage to be as it appears in the ancient Stoic conquers not only the fear of death but also the threat of meaninglessness. In Nietzsche we find that in spite of the predominance of the threat of meaninglessness, the anxiety of death and condemnation is passionately challenged. In all representatives of classical Christianity death and sin are seen as the allied adversaries against which the courage of faith has to fight. The three forms of anxiety (and of courage) are immanent in each other but normally under the dominance of one of them.<sup>10</sup>

Courage for Tillich is self-affirmation in the face of the fact of existential threats to being producing either fear or anxiety. Courage is sufficient for fear; but courage in the form of faith, or rather courage grounded in faith which means transcending the self, is needed to meet all the levels of normal anxieties threatening our life. Faith implies a relationship over and beyond the boundaries of human finitude with what Tillich terms the "ground of all being".

Since the relation of man to the ground of his being must be expressed in symbols taken from the structure of being, the polarity of participation and individualization determines the special character of this relation as it determines the special character of the courage to be. If participation is dominant, the relation to being-itself has a mystical character, if individualization prevails the relation to being-itself has a personal character, if both poles are accepted and transcended the relation to being-itself has the character of faith.<sup>11</sup>

At this point we see the subtle shift from Tillich the man wrestling with existential concerns, matters of fear and anxiety, courage and faith, to Tillich the systematic theologian neatly defining items within his system of thought so that these definitions will fit into a metaphysical scheme. He has chosen terms that can be used in this way. Now he introduces the idea of "symbols" so that he can bridge the gap between existential concerns and ontological thought-forms. These symbols become the categories into which the existential issues are placed as polarities within a larger unity. This application of his method is what he calls "correlation".

The process of moving from the existential situation over to the philosophical system of thought-forms is clearer in "The Courage to Be" as outlined above, but it is incorporated into the "Systematic Theology" in a discussion of finitude in relation to infinitude.<sup>12</sup> There his study of anxiety is compressed so as to fit into the several categories under which he is discussing human finitude. For example:

Finitude is awareness in anxiety. Like finitude, anxiety is an ontological quality. It cannot be derived; it can only be seen and described. Occasions in which anxiety is aroused must be distinguished from anxiety itself. As an ontological quality, anxiety is as omnipresent as is finitude. Anxiety is independent of any special object which might produce it; it is dependent only on the threat of nonbeing - which is identical with finitude. In this sense it has been said rightly that the object of anxiety is 'nothingness' - and nothingness is not an 'object'. Objects are feared. A danger, a pain, an enemy, may be feared, but fear can be conquered by action. Anxiety cannot, for no finite being can conquer its finitude. Anxiety is always present, although often it is latent. There-

fore, it can become manifest at any and every moment, even in situations where nothing is to be feared. The recovery of the meaning of anxiety through the combined endeavours of existential philosophy, depth psychology, neurology, and the arts is one of the achievements of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

Tillich, while discussing estrangement, employs both the language and the approach of an existentialist in order to wrestle with the actual situation of the human condition. The same is true when he is seeking to analyse fear and anxiety over against courage and faith. He is not being unduly subjective, but he is in fact looking at these problems from the "inside" as it were. Then when he seeks to place this discussion in the context of his theoretical structure he becomes objective and abstract in his approach, dealing with finitude and infinitude, being and nonbeing. At this point we need only note this shift. Perhaps it is unavoidable in the theological task, but from our vantage point we can distinguish the data of reality as experienced and the secondary task of reflecting upon this and setting conclusions forth in a consistent style. More weight, it seems, in practice at least (sermons, lectures, and popular writings) is given by Tillich to the existential starting-points. Tillich is aware of this tension and it is never resolved for him since he attempts to hold both in view as polar extremes within his ontological structure as he conceives it.

Anxiety is an ontological concept because it expresses finitude from 'inside'. Here it must be said that there is no reason for preferring concepts taken from 'outside' to those taken from 'inside'. According to the self-world structure, both types are equally valid. The self being aware of itself and the self looking at its world (including itself) are equally significant for the description of the ontological structure. . . It would seem adequate therefore, to give a description of finitude from both outside and inside, pointing to the special form of anxious awareness which corresponds to whatever special form of finitude is under consideration.<sup>14</sup>

He seems almost to apologize for giving such weight to existential concerns while carrying out the systematic task of the theologian. At any rate he



does attempt to include these concerns although in an abstracted form.

Another example of Tillich's existential wrestling with reality over against his systematic presentation of his conclusions is in the way he deals with faith. In "The Courage to Be", he has defined faith as "the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself"<sup>15</sup> and the exercise of faith is the experiencing of this power.

We have defined courage as the self-affirmation of being in spite of non-being. The power of this self-affirmation is the power of being which is effective in every act of courage. Faith is the experience of this power.

But it is an experience which has a paradoxical character, the character of accepting acceptance. Being-itself transcends every finite being infinitely; God in the divine-human encounter transcends man unconditionally. Faith bridges this infinite gap by accepting the fact that in spite of it the power of being is present, that he who is separated is accepted. . . Faith is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience.<sup>16</sup>

Turning to his discussion of faith in the Systematics Volume III, his different style of presentation indicates clearly that he regards the systematic task as quite different from that in "The Courage to Be".

. . . faith is the state of being grasped by the transcendent unity of unambiguous life - it embodies love as the state of being taken into that transcendent unity. From this analysis, it is obvious that faith logically precedes love, although in actuality neither can be present without the other. Faith without love is a continuation of estrangement and an ambiguous act of religious self-transcendence. Love without faith is an ambiguous reunion of the separated without the criterion and the power of the transcendent union. Neither of them is a creation of the Spiritual Presence, but both result from religious distortions of an original Spiritual creation.

These statements presuppose a full discussion of faith and love in order to be understandable. Such discussion could fill a large volume. (I myself have dealt with faith and love, each in a small book. Faith: Dynamics of Faith; love: Love, Power and Justice.) However, this is not the present task, which is to determine the place of the two concepts within the theological system and to show in this way their relation to other theological concepts and religious symbols.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly in his Systematic Theology Tillich is not prepared to discuss faith and love themselves, that is existentially; but only the concepts of faith and love, that is essentially or abstractly. He sees his task in the systematic approach on quite a different level from that of his existential wrestling with the realities themselves. The human situation is one thing, but theologizing about concepts derived from participation in the human situation is separated for Tillich into a different activity.

The question before us, therefore, is whether the existential problems of the self simply address and illustrate the doctrine of the Self as far as Tillich is concerned, or whether the doctrine of the Self is grounded in and upon the existential self as experienced directly. Since Tillich does in fact take the teachings and insights of existentialism seriously it is possible that the existential self takes priority over the essentialist Self (concept or doctrine). But on the other hand, Tillich's commitment to essentialist patterns of thought and ontological concerns may well be his overriding consideration in maintaining the consistency of the doctrine of the Self becoming far removed from the self as experienced. At any rate this tension between the two is apparent and it is my thesis that this is not resolved within his theological system as such.

Footnotes to Chapter 5

1. Tillich, P. Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology. (London: SCM Press, 1967) p. 244/245
2. Systematic Theology, Volume II, p. 39ff dealing with Creation and Fall.
3. Ibid., II, p. 49/50
4. Ibid., II, p. 69
5. Macmurray, John. The Self as Agent and Persons in Relation, the two parts of his Gifford Lectures. (London: Faber & Faber, 1957 and 1961). In The Self as Agent Macmurray sets out his basic thesis, after rejecting Kant's dualism of multiple selves, by replacing the "I think" (Self as thinker) with "I do" (Self as agent). In this way he maintains the form of the personal as a unitary Self in two ways: by rejecting the division of experience into theoretical and practical, and by asserting the primacy of the practical. He argues that thinking by itself is a fragmenting activity. By focusing on action the self and body are integrated without isolating reflective activity or ignoring emotions. For Macmurray the isolated Self is self-contradictory, as the Self is in fact constituted in relation with other personal selves. He then attempts to explore the field of the personal contrasting personal and impersonal relationships within both individual and social dynamics.
6. Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be. (London: Collins, Fontana Library, 1962) p. 15-17
7. Ibid., p. 21
8. Ibid., p. 30
9. cf. Ibid., p. 36, 44-45
10. Ibid., p. 49, 50
11. Ibid., p. 153
12. Tillich, P. Systematic Theology, Volume I, p. 186ff
13. Ibid., I, p. 191
14. Ibid., I, p. 191, 192
15. Tillich, Paul. The Courage to Be, p. 167
16. Ibid., p. 167
17. Tillich, P. Systematic Theology, Volume III, p. 129-130

## Tillich as an Existentialist Theologian

Although Tillich is usually regarded as an existentialist theologian and there is evidence for such a conclusion when we consider his popular writings, his sermons, his kairos doctrine of history, and his use of Biblical material which abounds in existential content, we need to ask if he really is. We need to distinguish between theologizing about existential questions and writing theology as an existentialist. Such a distinction is required when we consider that his Systematic Theology is organized about five existential questions (human rationality, human finitude, human sin, human selfhood and spirit, human destiny) which then give rise to their theological answers. When he launches into theology itself in order to answer the questions does he continue his existentialist stance or rather does he leave that behind as he crosses over to systematic and abstract thinking?

When this question was put to Tillich himself, he refused to accept the label "existentialist" and made it even more difficult to "place" him by this answer:

But there are two possible ways of looking at man. The one way is essentialist which develops the doctrine of man in terms of his essential nature within the whole of the universe. The other way is existentialist which looks at man in his predicament in time and space, and sees the conflict between what exists in time and space and what is essentially given. . . for me essentialism and existentialism belong together. It is impossible to be a pure essentialist if one is personally in the human relation and not sitting on the throne of God. . . On the other hand, a pure existentialism is impossible because to describe existence one must use language. Now language deals with universals. In using universals, language is by its very nature essentialist, and cannot escape it. . . Existentialism is possible only as an element in a larger whole, as an element in a vision of the structure of being in its created goodness, and then as a description of man's existence within that framework.<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible to hold both essentialism and existentialism together in this way without losing one or the other? We can see here an example of



Tillich's methodology of holding opposites in tension, seeking greater and underlying unity. The ground of unity, however, is not in evidence with the result that one pole can subordinate the other simply by providing the larger frame of reference which includes the other. Plato did this by relating all his ideas to a realm of essences, of "essentialist description and analysis".<sup>2</sup> Plato discusses existential questions in his myths about the human situation, but these in turn are related to the "real world" of essences. Tillich's approach here appears to fit this pattern.

Tillich's position can be seen in the way he criticizes Bultmann on this point, commending him for bringing out the existential elements of New Testament material with the help of Heidegger's teaching, but judging him deficient for failing to relate these to a structure of thought over and above these elements in a systematic way.

While this is the importance of Bultmann, he is not able to bring this into a real systematic structure, not even with the help of Heidegger's existentialism. But this existentialism does help him to show the existential character of the New Testament concepts. The existentialist interpretation of the New Testament deals with the concepts of anxiety, care, guilt, and emptiness, and this is important. I have also applied an existentialist interpretation of biblical texts in all the sermons I have preached. But Bultmann is not able to present all this in a real systematic structure.<sup>3</sup>

This question of a systematic structure might lead to either one of the poles in tension predominating. For Tillich, essentialism provides the structuring against which the other pole is interpreted. In the above quotation, however, he appears to acknowledge that it is also possible for existentialism, as in Heidegger, to provide the structure of interpretation, thus subsuming essentialist elements. Heidegger does in fact have a highly developed structure and methodology in presenting his existentialist philosophy. With Tillich his concern is for ontology, but he attempts to

break with essentialist thought patterns and approach existence so that being can speak for itself.

Existential Interpretation will never seek to take over any authoritarian pronouncement as to those things which, from an existential point of view, are possible or binding. But must it not justify itself in regard to those existentiell possibilities with which it gives ontological Interpretation its ontical basis? . . . And if, for the most part, Dasein interprets itself in terms of its lostness in concerning itself with the 'world', does not the appropriate way of disclosure for such an entity lie in determining the onto-existentiell possibilities (and doing so in the manner which we have achieved by following the opposite course) and then providing an existential analysis grounded upon these possibilities? In that case, will not the violence of this projection amount to freeing Dasein's undisguised phenomenal content?<sup>4</sup>

Heidegger faces the question that his concept of Dasein is just another ontological Interpretation imposed upon Being in an arbitrary way as with any other objective concept or category. He points to "Dasein's anticipatory resoluteness" as the phenomenon which discloses Dasein (Being) authentically through care (cf. Tillich's "finitude"). In its simplest form he says, "I am myself the entity which we call Dasein . . ."<sup>5</sup>

Tillich pointed out in his 1944 essay, as we noted above, that the knowledge of human finitude is necessary to an understanding of man. He added that the discussion of finitude leads to an analysis of Time since existence is distinguished from timeless essence by its temporal character. Hence Time is considered qualitatively in either personal or historic terms. Tillich tries to deal fairly with these dimensions when discussing the human situation and some of the existential concerns involved in this. The facing of existential finitude in the realization of human estrangement from God has this temporal dimension when freedom tries to become absolute and denies the limits to human life which human life and freedom implies. This self-contradiction can bring a person to the existential moment of affirming life, of discovering the

courage to be, and of discovering the reality of faith as being grasped by the power of Being-itself. Such an approach on Tillich's part he has learned from the existentialists and has included as a real part of his thought. Later we will see that these existential concerns, real as they are, are fitted into his system of thought with more or less success. At any rate they are part of his life and approach, even though he insists on setting them against an essentialist frame of reference.

Although he differs radically from Heidegger as to his basic method whereby he denies the necessity of bringing everything to an existentialist basis in order to proceed to an understanding of it, Tillich does come very close to Heidegger in many of his approaches and conclusions since he does take seriously the existential concerns of the human situation. This is seen clearly when the discussion turns from ontology to temporality. In both personal and historical matters this agreement is most striking.

Heidegger explains "anticipatory resoluteness" as the way the human potentiality for wholeness is expressed in authentic possibility. Resoluteness is the way Dasein deals with anxiety about itself, facing the possibility of nullity through guilt and death. In order to deal with anxiety, the limitations of Dasein must be faced, forcing Dasein as limited to be considered as a whole with boundaries. Now the way in which Dasein approaches those boundaries is the way that authentic existence opens up. Anticipation leads to resolution, especially regarding death and guilt.

Existentially, however, Dasein's 'Being-at-an-end' implies Being-towards-the-end. As Being-towards-the-end which understands -- that is to say, as anticipation of death -- resoluteness becomes authentically what it can be. Resoluteness does not just 'have' a connection with anticipation, as with something other than itself. It harbours in itself authentic Being-towards-death, as the possible existentiell modality of its own authenticity.<sup>6</sup>



Since according to Heidegger, anticipation looks ahead, sees the boundaries, and also raises the possibilities, then resolution manifests this potentiality. Hence "anticipatory resoluteness" relates existentially to wholeness within the dimension of temporality. This he terms "care".

Only on the basis of Dasein's whole Being does anticipation make Being-guilty manifest. Care harbours in itself both death and guilt equiprimordially. Only in anticipatory resoluteness is the potentiality-for-Being-guilty understood authentically and wholly -- that is to say, primordially.<sup>7</sup>

For Heidegger the facing of the boundaries is not an escape from reality, but rather the way that life can be faced authentically. In his interpretation of the real connection between resoluteness and anticipation in terms of existence he sees this as the opening up of possibilities.

Anticipatory resoluteness is not a way of escape, fabricated for the 'overcoming' of death; it is rather that understanding which follows the call of conscience and which frees for death the possibility of acquiring power over Dasein's existence and of basically dispersing all fugitive Self-Concealments. Nor does wanting-to-have-a-conscience, which has been determinate as Being-towards-death, signify a kind of seclusion in which one flees the world; rather, it brings one without illusions into the resoluteness of 'taking action'. Neither does anticipatory resoluteness stem from idealistic exactions soaring above existence and its possibilities; it springs from a sober understanding of what are factually the basic possibilities for Dasein. Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility. In it Dasein becomes free from the entertaining 'incidentals' with which busy curiosity keeps providing itself -- primarily from the events of the world.<sup>8</sup>

Tillich comes very close to Heidegger's position in his discussion of human finitude. He teaches that to understand being, we must understand the threat of non-being, that is, the boundaries of our being. This gives him his definition of finitude, "being limited by nonbeing". Although he has been discussing ontological categories and concepts, when he turns to discuss finitude he uses existential language.



Selfhood, individuality, dynamics, and freedom all include manifoldness, definiteness, differentiation, and limitation. To be something is not to be something else. To be here and now in the process of becoming is not to be there and then. All categories of thought and reality express this situation. To be something is to be finite.

Finitude is experienced on the human level; nonbeing is experienced as the threat to being. The end is anticipated. The process of self-transcendence carries a double meaning in each of its moments. . . In order to be aware of moving toward death, man must look over his finite being as a whole; he must in some way be beyond it. He must also be able to imagine infinity; (although) . . . only as an abstract possibility. The finite self faces a world; the finite individual has the power of universal participation.<sup>10</sup>

Heidegger outlines the steps he followed in developing his method of existential interpretation, always avoiding the importing of ideas from essentialist categories so that Dasein can impose itself.

Under the guidance of this idea the preparatory analysis of the everydayness that lies closest to us has been carried out as far as the first conceptual definition of 'care'. This latter phenomenon has enabled us to get a more precise grasp of existence and of its relations to facticity and falling. And defining the structure of care has given us a basis on which to distinguish ontologically between existence and Reality for the first time. This has led us to the thesis that the substance of man is existence.<sup>11</sup>

He then wrestles with the concept of Being which he has just expressed in an ontological formula as a part of his Interpretation at this point, as well as the basic primordial experience of Dasein which is the clue to our existence and the way we grasp the significance of our Being. This raises the charge of a 'circular argument', simply proving one's pre-suppositions, which he then addresses:

When it is objected that the existential Interpretation is 'circular', it is said that we have 'presupposed' the idea of existence and of Being in general, and that Dasein gets Interpreted 'accordingly', so that the idea of Being may be obtained from it. But what does 'presupposition' signify? In positing the idea of existence, do we also posit some propositions about the Being of Dasein, in accordance with formal rules of consistency? Or does this presupposing have

have the character of an understanding projection, in such a manner indeed that the interpretation by which such an understanding gets developed, will let that which is to be interpreted put itself into words for the very first time, so that it may decide of its own accord whether, as the entity which it is, it has that state of Being for which it has been disclosed in the projection with regard to its formal aspects?<sup>12</sup>

For Heidegger Being imposes itself upon the consciousness as it is experienced and words are employed tentatively to express what is thus experienced. The interpretation is circular as these tentative ideas are linked together, further clarifying progressive experience. The ideas must not, however, become detached from the experience of Dasein in the name of a logical theory or consistent deduction without negating their validity, which validity derives not from logic but from what is described. Heidegger defends the use of the circular presentation primarily on the grounds that it is "common sense" of the "they-Self" which sets up the rules of logic in the first place in order to escape confronting Being. The "they-Self" tries to live in the third person, avoiding Being-itself. He rejects such logic as advancing from abstraction to further abstraction, getting further away from reality, limiting experience only to facticity (the objective data of "facts"), which, in its fallenness and "throwness" (the way things are) blocks understanding. Heidegger's comment sums this up: "Common sense misunderstands understanding".<sup>13</sup>

To understand understanding requires an openness to Dasein:

When one talks of the 'circle' in understanding, one expresses a failure to recognize two things: 1) that understanding as such makes up a basic kind of Dasein's Being, and 2) that this Being is constituted as care. To deny the circle, to make a secret of it, or even to want to overcome it, means finally to reinforce this failure. We must rather endeavour to leap into the 'circle', primordially and wholly, so that even at the start of the analysis of Dasein we make sure that we have a full view of Dasein's circular Being.<sup>14</sup>

According to Heidegger to do otherwise than to "leap into the circle" is to posit some other artificial and abstract base Object from which to argue, standing over against Dasein (the Being of the Self), with the result that we restrict ourselves to the theoretical side, always consistent with our abstract base, with the result that anything practical is tacked on as an appendix or "ethic" which flows as a conclusion or deduction. While Heidegger is satisfied with the circular concept, I would like to suggest that the model of a spiral might be a more useful one than that of a repetitious circle. Undoubtedly reality lies in the centre and must be experienced directly, but surely one rises in understanding "each time round", so to speak, as ideas are related to one another and rechecked.

Heidegger's methodology is also the key to his "Being and Time" which is as much training in this method as it is existential interpretation. He concludes with this observation:

This may suffice to clarify the existential meaning of the hermeneutical Situation of a primordial analytic of Dasein. By exhibiting anticipatory resoluteness, we have brought Dasein before us with regard to its authentic totality, so that we now have it in advance. The authenticity of the potentiality-for-Being-one's-Self guarantees that primordial existentiality is something we see in advance.<sup>15</sup>

It is apparent that Heidegger's method is diametrically opposed to Tillich's since he submits all essentialist ideas and concepts to the existential basis of human Being and experience. Since Tillich holds to an essentialist framework of thought against which to give his interpretation of existential concerns he is not an "existentialist".

While Tillich can discuss finitude from an existentialist point of view as he explores the limitations of the human situation, he soon finds it necessary for him to return to essentialist categories for his systematic thinking. He goes on to discuss finitude and the categories that his mind



requires to grasp the ideas. He lists four main categories: time, space, causality, and substance, but indicates that "we must in each case consider not only the positive and the negative elements 'from the outside', namely, in relation to the world, but we must consider them also 'from the inside', namely, in relation to the self."<sup>16</sup> Time, he says, is not only the first but also the central category. Within each category he discusses being and nonbeing, courage and anxiety.

The distinction between essence and existence represents the basic stance of any theological system of thought and is far from arbitrary as but one side issue. How these two elements relate together, if they do, is of prime importance. In comparing Tillich with Heidegger we can understand clearly where Tillich stands and how he relates existential concerns to the all-pervading essentialist framework of his thought. How he defines these two terms (which can be very ambiguous at times) is important.

Essence can mean the nature of a thing without any valuation of it, it can mean the universals which characterize a thing, it can mean the ideas in which existing things participate, it can mean the norm by which a thing must be judged, it can mean the original goodness of everything created, and it can mean the patterns of all things in the divine mind. The basic ambiguity, however, lies in the oscillation of the meaning between an empirical and a valuating sense. Essence as the nature of a thing, or as the quality in which a thing participates, or as a universal, has one character. Essence as that from which being has 'fallen', the true and undistorted nature of things, has another character. In the second case essence is the basis of value judgments, while in the first case essence is a logical ideal to be reached by abstraction or intuition without the interference of valuations. . . Essence empowers and judges that which exists. It gives it its power of being, and, at the same time, it stands against it as a commanding law.<sup>17</sup>

Where essence and existence are united as one there is no contradiction, hence the law has no power to enter into judgment. In practice, however, this is not the case and the law takes precedence, even destroying itself.



Existence can mean the possibility of finding a thing within the whole of being, it can mean the actuality of what is potential in the realm of essence, it can mean the 'fallen world', and it can mean a type of thinking which is aware of its existential conditions or which rejects essence entirely. . . . (In Aristotle) the actual is the real, but the essential provides its power of being, and in the highest essence potentiality and actuality are one. . . . A complete discussion of the relation of essence<sup>18</sup> to existence is identical with the entire theological system.

With these definitions Tillich is preparing the way for fitting his existential concerns into his system of thought, giving the preponderant weight to essentialist ideas which give power, definition, standards of judgment, and an aim or potential by which to form human life and society. His previous discussion of finitude, however, raises issues which cannot be fitted neatly into any system. He identifies selfhood, individuality, dynamics, and freedom as existential elements of finitude. These are real issues to be taken seriously, not simply covered over by a blanket classification. Each self is unique, living as a person whose life has meaning and purpose because of what happens in the interaction of daily living in a particular time and place, relating to specific persons and events, reacting to certain conditions and circumstances. General or universal truths tell us little about the selfhood of a person who is known by his own name. Individuality may be described analytically as participation in biological, social, and psychological tendencies, but this tells us little about the individual that is thus described. Dynamics are both general and specific to situations and circumstances. These are of limited value in understanding a person himself, although the light they shed on the context of a person's life may go far toward explaining how and why a person lived as he did. Yet even with a specific set of dynamics bearing upon a person the unique self may well assert freedom to react in an unforeseen way without explanation. Freedom

by its very nature, even though carefully proscribed as a limited freedom, is still freedom and expresses itself as such. Simple reference to such existential conditions in another frame of reference is to deny their validity. Yet Tillich is careful to deny that they may be glossed over.

Here is the dilemma which Heidegger refers to as the action of the "they-self", the attempt to treat in an impersonal and objective manner that which can only be experienced by direct encounter on an existential level. The "they-self" avoids such an encounter by resorting to abstractions, one step at least, removed from the reality thus being described. This is the price paid by most essentialist thinkers in their attempt to be objective and universally inclusive. In fact they miss the reality they point toward. Tillich is trying very hard to avoid this pitfall, hence he gives full weight to the existential nature of the human subject. Yet his persistent need to generalize leaves him open to the charge that in the end of the day he misses the concreteness constantly impressing itself upon him. He rightly says that his whole system is an attempt to sort out this question. His existential concerns threaten to undermine his whole essentialist approach and vice versa.

J. H. Thomas makes an extended contrast between Tillich and Heidegger in his discussion of Tillich's doctrine of finitude with its four basic categories which relate to the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo since both men have a definite idea of non-being over against the creature and the resulting anxiety produced by awareness of this possible non-being. Thomas goes on to show that Tillich's understanding of existentialism is quite different from Heidegger's even where he claims to be closest to him. Tillich in fact is much closer related to a nineteenth century understanding due to his dependency upon Schelling rather than to a twentieth century approach,

although using the language and problems of the twentieth century in his system.

There are two things which must be said about this connection between Tillich and Heidegger. First, it is significant that for Tillich the decisive beginning of existential philosophy is to be found in Schelling's later work, and that the preparation for his acceptance of Heidegger was his acquaintance with Kierkegaard and the Lebensphilosophie movement. This, I suggest, makes his brand of Existentialism (which is in any case a very dangerous blanket term) much nearer to the mood of nineteenth-century philosophy than it is to the mood of contemporary philosophy, a mood of iconoclasm and metaphysical seeking which is shared by existentialist and linguistic philosophies. Secondly, however close Tillich may think Heidegger is to the Christian interpretation of human existence, neither Heidegger himself nor his best interpreters have so understood his death-centered evaluation of human existence. So we may repeat that the appearance of modernity in Tillich is like that which a duly edited version of Schelling with a preface by Sartre could be imagined to possess.<sup>19</sup>

Tillich's compulsion to bring all things into harmony means that he never left his nineteenth-century teachers while he himself was caught up in a period of history unprecedented for change and conflict. History and harmony are contradictions that cannot be reconciled by retreating into the thought-forms of a former era without one or other threatening to ruin the scheme. This is Tillich's stance and therefore this is his basic problem. We will see that this basic contradiction, imported into his system in the form of polar tensions, underlies the system at every point and weakens its credibility even though many useful insights are set forth in the process.

Footnotes to Chapter 6

1. Tillich, P. Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, edited by C. E. Braaten. (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967) p. 243 - 245  
  
Tillich replies to the query if he is an existentialist theologian: "My answer is always short. I say, fifty-fifty. This means that for me essentialism and existentialism belong together." (p. 245) Such an answer raises more problems that it solves since it is the relationship between these two elements that must be determined before an answer can be given to the question.
2. Ibid., p. 228
3. Ibid., p. 228      cf. p. 133, 220
4. Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time, trans. by Jn. Macquarrie. (London: Blackwell, 1963) Part II.3.63      p. 360
5. Ibid., p. 361
6. Ibid., p. 353
7. Ibid., p. 354
8. Ibid., p. 357/8
9. Tillich, P. Systematic Theology. (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1951) Volume I, p. 189
10. Ibid., I, p. 190
11. Heidegger, M. Being and Time
12. Ibid., p. 362
13. Ibid., p. 363
14. Ibid., p. 363
15. Ibid., p. 364
16. Tillich, P. Systematic Theology. cf. J. H. Thomas, Paul Tillich, An Appraisal. (S.C.M. 1963) p. 114 - 119. Thomas shows how each of these four categories of finitude are related to the doctrine of Creatio ex nihilo which gives them an existential base but raises questions of determinism.
17. Ibid., I, p. 203
18. Ibid., I, p. 202 - 204
19. Thomas, J. H. Paul Tillich: An Appraisal (London: S.C.M. 1963) p. 175



**III. PAUL TILLICH: HIS SYSTEM**

- 7. The Centered Self**
- 8. The Hebrew View of Man**
- 9. The Heart of the System**
- 10. The Self in the System**
- 11. The New Being in the System**
- 12. Tillich's Autobiographical Approach to Theology**

## The Centered Self

Tillich's "method of correlation" of what he terms the "existential questions and theological answers" indicates that the theological answers are of a different order from the existential questions. In the opening pages of his second volume of the Systematic Theology,<sup>1</sup> he uses the illustration of a door and the house into which it opens, setting forth the interrelations of questions and answers. Does the form of the question determine the final shape of the answer? Does the theological "house", on the other hand, shape the "door" or approach to the house? Admitting that the questions are of an existential nature, should the theological answers be of the same coin? For Tillich, the theological answers are independent of these questions.

While the material of the existential question is the very expression of the human predicament, the form of the question is determined by the total system and by the answers given in it. The question implied in human finitude is directed toward the answer: the eternal. The question implied in human estrangement is directed toward the answer: forgiveness. This directedness of the questions does not take away their seriousness, but it gives them a form determined by the theological system as a whole. This is the sphere within which the correlation of<sup>2</sup> existential questions and theological answers takes place.

For Tillich the basic ontological structure for his theological system is the relationship between the Self and the World. These are the basic correlates upon which the system is built. From this starting point the whole of the ontological structure is expounded as an answer to this very complex dialectical relationship.

Man experiences himself as having a world to which he belongs. . . Self-relatedness is implied in every experience. . . The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness. . . A self is not a thing that may or may not exist; it is an original phenomenon which logically precedes all questions of existence.<sup>3</sup>

Tillich then goes on to provide his definition of Self and World:

The term 'self' is more embracing than the term 'ego'. It includes the subconscious and the unconscious 'basis' of the self-conscious ego as well as self-consciousness (cogitatio in the Cartesian sense). Therefore, selfhood or self-centeredness must be attributed in some measure to all living beings and, in terms of analogy, to all individual Gestalten even in the inorganic realm.<sup>4</sup> . . . Man is a fully developed and completely centered self.

and Because man has an ego-self, he transcends every possible environment. Man has a world. Like environment, world is a correlative concept. Man has a world, although he is in it at the same time. 'World' is not the sum total of all beings - an inconceivable concept. As the Greek kosmos and the Latin universum indicate, 'world' is a structure or a unity of manifoldness.

Since the human self is self-centered, being aware of what it is and what it is not, the fact of man's finitude impresses itself upon him. Yet at the same time the relation of the self to its world is such that it is able to transcend this unity due to the ordered nature of that world. Man can rise in thought to wrestle with the problems imposed by his limitations, probing beyond to ultimate boundaries or horizons of concern. Hence the question of the being of "God" arises from these ultimate concerns.

'God' is the answer to the question implied in man's finitude; he is the name for that which concerns man ultimately. This does not mean that first there is a being called God and then the demand that man should be ultimately concerned about him. It means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for him. . . . Gods are beings who transcend the realm of ordinary experience in power and meaning, with whom men have relations which surpass ordinary relations in intensity and significance. . . . They are images of human nature or subhuman powers raised to a superhuman realm. . . . The realm against which the divine images are projected is not itself a projection. It is the experienced ultimacy of being and meaning. It is the realm of ultimate concern.<sup>6</sup>

From this phenomenological description of God and man's ultimate concern, Tillich seeks to show that we must not stop short of ultimacy in any concept of God or else we will fall into the trap of projecting human characteristics and making gods out of these. Only with ultimate being and

meaning should we be concerned in this quest. He seeks to fulfil this remit by means of his analysis of the structure of ontology in his system. For Tillich, the "being of God is being-itself".<sup>7</sup> God is not just another being, albeit raised to the highest power of perfection, along side of other beings; but rather God is the Absolute, transcending both existence and essence (the structures and forms of finitude as created). Man, being bound to finitude, can only know God through symbolic expression, whereas God as the ground of all being is not subject to the structures of being.

Therefore, it is not precise to identify God with the infinite. This can be done on some levels of analysis. If man and his world are described as finite, God is infinite in contrast to them. But the analysis must go beyond this level in both directions. Man is aware of his finitude because he has the power of transcending it and of looking at it. Without this awareness he could not call himself mortal. On the other hand, that which is infinite would not be infinite if it were not limited by the finite. God is infinite because he has the finite (and with it that element of nonbeing which belongs to finitude) within himself united with his infinity.

As the ground of all being, God must be beyond all limitations, yet embrace all.

Is it meaningful then to speak of creation or creatureliness? Tillich argues that since the ground of all being embraces both finitude and infinitude, it is characteristic of the divine life to be creative, to actualize itself.

The divine life and the divine creativity are not different. God is creative because he is God. . . He eternally 'creates himself', a paradoxical phrase which states God's freedom. Nor is creation contingent. It does not 'happen' to God, for it is identical with his life. Creation is not only God's freedom but also his destiny. But it is not a fate; it is neither a necessity nor an accident which determines him. The doctrine of creation is not the story of an event which took place 'once upon a time'. It is the basic description of the relation between God and the world. It is the correlate to the analysis of man's finitude. It answers the question implied in man's fortitude and in finitude generally. In giving this answer, it discovers that the meaning of finitude is creatureliness.<sup>9</sup>



It is at this point that Tillich comes close to a doctrine of pantheism, the implicit danger of every immanentist system of thought. He is careful to point out that pantheism in fact means that the divine life is so identified with the structures of being that it becomes bound by them in the process of identification. It is an open question, however, whether such a distinction is little more than academic in the end result. This, moreover, raises many questions including the basic one of human freedom and accountability in the existential situation. Tillich replies:

The doctrine of creation out of nothing expresses two fundamental truths. The first is that the tragic character of existence is not rooted in the creative ground of being; consequently, it does not belong to the essential nature of things. In itself finitude is not tragic, that is, it is not doomed to self-destruction by its very greatness. Therefore, the tragic is not conquered by avoiding the finite as much as possible, that is, by ontological asceticism. The tragic is conquered by the presence of being-itself within the finite. The second truth expressed in this doctrine is that there is an element of nonbeing in creatureliness; this gives insight into the natural necessity of death and into the potentiality but not necessity of the tragic.<sup>10</sup>

As a thoroughgoing pantheism would have the effect of limiting human life under the yoke of determinism with God the all in all, Tillich here parts company with those who confuse the creaturely with the divine and lays the groundwork for true human freedom and accountability. He goes on:

But man's being is not only hidden in the creative ground of the divine life; it also is manifest to itself and to other life within the whole of reality. Man does exist, and his existence is different from his essence. Man and the rest of reality are not only 'inside' the process of the divine life but also 'outside' it. Man is grounded in it, but he is not kept within the ground. Man has left the ground in order to 'stand upon' himself, to actualize what he essentially is, in order to be finite freedom.<sup>11</sup>

We have now come to the "hinge" in Tillich's thought, the way he relates his essentialist framework to the existential situation. It is the essential man who is "inside" the ground of his being, the divine life, and

the existential man who is "outside", standing on his own ground. When "inside", though unactualized in existence, man is not free, but he is not limited by the conditions of finitude. When "outside", human freedom, though finite freedom, is real enough to make him accountable for the tragic character of existence since this is not necessarily so because of the mere fact of existence itself. While "outside", man is bound by finitude and the structures of life "outside" including time and space. The challenge before man "outside" the divine life is to actualize his being according to what he is essentially or "inside" the divine life. This is man as he is in existence, somehow less than his potential or essential nature.

To sum up the discussion: being a creature means both to be rooted in the creative ground of the divine life and to actualize one's self through freedom. Creation is fulfilled in the creaturely self-realization which simultaneously is freedom and destiny. But it is fulfilled through separation from the creative ground through a break between existence and essence. Creaturely freedom is the point at which creation and the fall coincide.<sup>12</sup>

One further point regarding the position of man in existence as a creature charged with manifesting the divine life is the concept of man as "the image of God". Human life is the telos or end, fulfilling the destiny of the divine life to actualize itself in existence. Man is unique among the creatures since he alone qualifies as a totally centered self.

Man is the creature in which the ontological elements are complete. They are incomplete in all creatures, which (for this very reason) are called 'subhuman'. Subhuman does not imply less perfection than in the case of the human. On the contrary, man as the essentially threatened creature cannot compare with the natural perfection of the subhuman creatures. Subhuman points to a different ontological level, not to a different degree of perfection.<sup>13</sup>

With the introduction of this teleological idea of the "image of God" imposing a destiny upon the human creature, the most urgent task then is to consider how a man might become aware of this "high calling". Is this little

more than the persuasion of ontological ideas taking man to this conclusion? Is it possible for the human self to be in intelligent contact with the ground of his being? How does one rise to a knowledge of God existentially or is this only a matter of human concern and reason? To answer such questions will involve a detailed analysis of the self.

In his discussion of the multidimensional unity of life in Volume III of the Systematic Theology, Tillich explores the meaning of "spirit" as one of the dimensions. He points out that the term spirit changed from its original meaning of "breath", representing the power of life animating the body, through philosophical development until the spirit became separated from the body. From the time of Descartes the term spirit merged with "mind" or "intellect", losing the force of "spirit". Yet for Tillich "spirit" is important for the doctrine of man and he seeks to relate it to other terms in current use, namely, soul, mind, and reason. Although the semantic confusion over the years has often rendered terms like spirit vacuous, the adjective "spirited" has still managed to retain something of its original force as power.

The term "soul" (psyche) has gone through a similar change; although the word is used widely in poetry and liturgy it is ambiguous.

Modern psychology is psychology without a psyche. The reason for this is the rejection of the soul as an immortal 'substance' by modern epistemology since Hume and Kant. The word 'soul' has been preserved mainly in poetry where it designates the seat of the passions and emotions. In the contemporary doctrine of man, the psychology of personality deals with phenomena attributed to the human soul. If spirit is defined as the unity of power and meaning, it can become a partial substitute for the lost concept of soul, although it transcends it in range, in structure, and in dynamics. . .

Although the word "mind" (nous) cannot become a substitute for 'spirit' it has a basic function in the doctrine of life. It expresses the consciousness of a living being in relation to its surroundings and to itself. It includes awareness,

perception, intention. It appears in the dimension of animality as soon as self-awareness appears; and in rudimentary or developed form, it includes intelligence, will, directed action. Under the predominance of the dimension of spirit, i.e., in man, it is related to the universals in perception and intention. . . .

Reason in the sense of logos is the principle of form by which reality in all its dimensions, and mind in all its directions, is structured. . . Spirit as a dimension of life includes more than reason - it includes eros, passion, imagination - but without logos-structure, it could not express anything. Reason in the sense of technical reason or of reasoning is one of the potentialities of man's spirit in the cognitive sphere. It is the tool for the scientific analysis and technical control of reality.<sup>14</sup>

By subordinating soul, mind, and reason to spirit, and by defining each of the three as specific functions of spirit, Tillich does not bridge the separation of spirit from body originating in ancient Greek philosophy. Yet he has hereby set the stage for discussing relationships between spirit and Spirit, discussing all of personality in terms of personal functions of spirit or of Spirit. The interchangeability of spirit and Spirit is accomplished by means of his concept of dimensions of life, and it is supported by his understanding of the actualization of the ground of all being in a specific personality. What does this do to the unity of life?

Constellations of conditions make it possible for the organic to appear in the inorganic realm. Constellations in the inorganic realm make it possible for the dimension of self-awareness to become actual, and in the same way constellations under the predominance of the psychological dimension make it possible for the dimension of the spirit to become actual. . . . The question is rather how the actualization of the potential follows from the constellation of conditions.<sup>15</sup>

Tillich places great emphasis upon his idea of "dimensions" of personality rather than one of "levels" in his attempt to maintain a unity of the self. By insisting on "dimensions", he allows for mutual interpenetration and interaction. The emergence of spirit in man is a form of self-transcendence as the self in its development focuses in the spirit dimension.



Man cannot not be man, as animal cannot not be animal. But man can partly miss that creative act in which the dominance of the psychological is overcome by the dominance of the spirit. As we shall see, this is the essence of the moral problem.

These considerations reject implicitly the doctrine that at a precise moment of the evolutionary process God in a special act added an 'immortal soul' to an otherwise complete body, with this soul bearing the life of the spirit. This idea - in addition to being based on the metaphor 'level' and a corresponding supernaturalistic doctrine of man - disrupts the multidimensional unity of life, especially the unity of the psychological and the spirit, thus making the dynamics of the human personality completely incomprehensible.

Instead of separating the spirit from the conditioning psychological realm, we shall try to describe the rise of an act of the spirit out of a constellation of psychological factors. Every act of the spirit presupposes given psychological material and, at the same time, constitutes a leap which is possible only for a totally centered self, that is to say, one that is free.<sup>16</sup>

The unity of life is maintained in this continuum by this concept of the "totally centered self". Here is the actualization of personality in this focus in the dimension of spirit, which, for Tillich, is what humanity as such is all about. This is the personal centre in man, the self.<sup>17</sup>

Tillich feels that this concept of the centered self provides the unity of life and personality needed to counterbalance any form of dualism contrasting "spirit" either with "soul" (or mind, etc.) or with body:

The preceding description of acts of the spirit implicitly refutes both a dualistic contrasting of the spirit with the psychological and a dissolution of the spirit into the psychological out of which it arises. The principle of multidimensional unity denies dualism as well as psychologicalistic (or biologicistic) monism.<sup>18</sup>

Now Tillich seems to have departed from his definition of spirit as "power" with which he began. Also the psychological elements, which he had related to spirit by way of subordinating them, now appear to function in a dimension parallel to spirit; yet spirit transcends them, remaining distinct

from them, and transforms them in the process. He denies "levels" in the personality, while obviously making use of the idea under the term "dimensions". The "spirit" is obviously above the psychological elements. While stressing unity of the self, he threatens to split it.

Tillich is so concerned to argue against a concept of an "immortal soul" that he has chosen to ignore the term soul altogether. At best he has conceded that the psychological dimension fulfils this function in a partial way, while the spirit dimension fulfils other functions. While the New Testament makes little distinction between "soul" and "spirit", the Old Testament is clear that man is a soul, having a body and a spirit. The Biblical term "soul" is quite distinct from the philosophical notion of the "immortal soul" which has its roots in Greek philosophical thought. Tillich's argument is actually against classical Greek concepts, but by ignoring the rich Biblical material he falls into contradictory abstraction.

Reinhold Niebuhr<sup>19</sup> has pointed out that the Biblical understanding (if one can generalize about this which is more properly the Hebrew understanding) of man was based on relationships rather than on ontological analysis. Sin and responsibility must be taken seriously, as must death to a dying self, in order that the renewal of resurrection might also take place through divine grace. The Biblical concept of freedom is freedom in relation to grace, rather than the freedom of finitude rooted in creation. For Niebuhr, Tillich is so committed to the philosophical approach that he ignores the historical, thus he finds fulfilment in potentiality not in actuality. He is suggesting that Tillich is in the position of speaking about the existential but denying it in practice.

In his Biblical study of the term "spirit", Tillich does try to come to grips with the traditional concepts in a fresh way. To do so he has made

use of Greek terms which reflect their Greek frame of reference within the New Testament context, but he does not refer to the Hebrew background of understanding current in the early apostolic community. Tillich discusses psyche, nous, logos, and others, but he presupposes that the usual Greek distinction is the case in point, rather than being a translation of original Hebrew ideas into a foreign and more sophisticated language. The nuances of a term such as psyche, suggesting a notion of an immortal substance, probably was not of the first order of importance in translating the Hebrew nephesh. If the Hebrew concept of the totality of the personality was considered and the Greek term set against this, then his consideration of the human spirit from a Biblical point of view, as opposed to a non-existent soul, would not have been so strained. He argues that the spirit includes the "soul" (which he understands as non-existent) and then the spirit is able to have direct affinity with the divine life. Meanwhile the Hebrew idea emphasizes the unity of life and personality, but provides an existential basis for understanding life and personality. Since Tillich ignores this, he stresses the spirit as the essential dimension of human life. This, of course, dovetails with his immanentist concept of the divine Spirit.

In order that we might examine this Hebrew concept of the soul as the totality of the human personality, expressing itself in concrete human relationships and in the divine-human relationship, I have devoted the next chapter to this subject. Tillich's own position is clearly philosophical and his purpose apologetic in terms of his theological system, but his system does not allow for Biblical material to be used, except as a "symbol" to point beyond to ontological interpretations. The existentialism of the Bible must be met on the existential level, however, whether or not it supports or suggests theological reflections at an abstract level.



Footnotes to Chapter 7

1. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume II, p. 14
2. Ibid., II, p. 15
3. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume I, p. 169
4. Ibid., I, p. 169
5. Ibid., I, p. 170
6. Ibid., I, p. 211/212
7. Ibid., I, p. 235
8. Ibid., I, p. 252
9. Ibid., I, p. 252
10. Ibid., I, p. 254
11. Ibid., I, p. 255
12. Ibid., I, p. 256
13. Ibid., I, p. 260
14. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume III, p. 24
15. Ibid., III, p. 25
16. Ibid., III, p. 26/27
17. Tillich's idea of the personal centre in man, the self, is not a static centre but is actively developing in terms of self-transcendence. The transcendence of the centre over any one and over all of the dimensions which interact together, yet being transformed by the spirit dimension, is what he means by personal. In this way the potentialities of each dimension are actualized in the process of transformation or transcendence, focusing in the centre, the self:

It is the centered self which actualizes itself as a personal self by distinguishing, separating, rejecting, preferring, connecting, and in so doing, transcending its elements. The act, or more exactly the whole complex of acts, in which this happens, has the character of freedom. . . freedom in the sense of a total reaction of a centered self which deliberates and decides. (Systematic Theology, Vol. III, p. 28)

18. Ibid., III, p. 28



19. cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich's Theology", in The Theology of Paul Tillich, edited by Kegley and Bretall (MacMillan 1964) p. 218ff.

When man's uneasy conscience is heightened, it leads to repentance, to a dying to self (that is, the self in its narrow self-centeredness) which has the consequence of a new self. The faith by which the self apprehends God as judge and redeemer presupposes repentance even as repentance presupposes faith. Faith in the Bible is. . . an apprehension of the divine made possible by a destruction of the idolatry of the self, and a destruction of the idolatry of the self by the recognition that the ultimate source and end of life stands against the pretensions of the self. In this Biblical concept, despite the paradoxical relations between fate and freedom, the emphasis lies upon freedom and responsibility.

## The Hebrew View of Man

In his Alexander Love Lectures of 1955 in Melbourne, R. C. Smith puts forth the generally accepted conclusion that the Biblical view of man is one, that it is a Hebrew understanding and not Greek, and that in the course of history the Augustinian-Aquinas static definitions of man and his world have led into the falsifying of life, and finally that through the Renaissance and the Reformation the Biblical basic understanding was recovered. Since then it has been present although obscured by rationalism, neo-scholasticism, idealism, and so on. The recovery of the Biblical insights, however, along with the work of all those involved in the "existentialist movement" (defined broadly as Tillich does), has given to theology a new lease on life, coming at a time when philosophy as a discipline is facing stormy weather. What was recovered at the Reformation produced a fundamental shift in understanding both of the individual and of man's place in history.

The Old Testament and New Testament insight into the integrity of human life was recovered. Human life involved not two worlds, but one world; not a two-fold system with nature and super-nature neatly dovetailed into one another, but one world, into which God's Word penetrated.<sup>1</sup>

As we proceed now to examine human experience and the development of selfhood this would seem to be the place to analyse the Biblical understanding of man and society, particularly the Hebrew background. This becomes very important in evaluating Tillich's work on the subject since he tends to overlook the tremendous contribution that the Hebrew mind has to make, often verging on a Marcionite approach to the Scriptures, the same error made by the essentialist philosophers he criticises.

The Old Testament emphasizes the frailty of man, and yet the dignity of man as God's creature. It also emphasizes the unity and integrity of the individual, as well as the solidarity of the individual in his social con-

text. It is interesting to note how these elements come through in the terms used to designate man. E. Jacob points out,

If it is true that 'adam insists on the human kind, 'enosh on his feebleness, 'ish on his power, geber on his strength, then we can say that added together they indicate that man according to the Old Testament is a perishable creature, who lives only as the member of a group, but that he is also a powerful being capable of choice and dominion.<sup>2</sup>

Hebrew psychology has been summarized by Jacob,

Man is a psycho-physical being and psychical functions are bound so closely to his physical nature that they are localized in bodily organs which themselves only draw their life from the vital force that animates them.<sup>2</sup>

For the Hebrew a man is a body animated by the life which has its various aspects and expressions. Although it is difficult to distinguish absolutely in any clear-cut way what is implied by the different terms used to describe this life or soul which pervades the body, some sort of analysis is possible if the basic perspective of a totality is remembered.

The early creation myth in Genesis 2:7 helps to make clear the basic Hebrew concept: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul." (A.V.) The Hebrew term for "breath of life" is רוח חיים and the final clause is והאדם חי This might be compared to the late expression from the period of the Wisdom literature (Ecc. 12:7) "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the Spirit (רוח) shall return unto God who gave it."

We can see that man is made of dust and returns to dust, while at the same time man has a God-breathed spirit which comes from God and then returns to God. But man, as a totality, is a "living soul", the expression of God's "breath of life". Greek notions of a dichotomy of soul and body



or a trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit are foreign to the Hebrew concept of man as a "living soul", a unitary entity. God does not supply a soul to man, but God's creating breath transforms the clay into a man. It is interesting to note that the Egyptians had a similar understanding and a similar creation myth.<sup>3</sup>

This man, in his totality, with his own particular stamp or combination of characteristics is a soul or nepheesh (נֶפֶשׁ). In the Old Testament the word is also applied to animal species. The recognition of the nepheesh depends upon the mental impressions that are made on other people through various associations. Pederson says:

All sensations act together in the making of the mental image. To the soul of a man pertains his appearance, his voice, the more or less hairy quality of his skin, his smell. To this must be added his manner of acting, all that he has done, all that belongs to him, which elements together constitute his soul. Among all the impressions received of him continuity obtains, the one immediately calling forth all the others, and of course, first and foremost, those which stamp the essence of his being with its special characteristics.

Therefore, the soul is at the same time something visible and invisible. Instinctively one senses only individual parts of the man one meets. One perceives a figure with a certain expression, certain movements, a certain manner of speech, etc. This momentary impression only becomes the idea of a soul when the whole of its background is imagined, so that it finds its place in a whole. Thus we get the idea of the man in question, and this is what primitive peoples call soul. It is always present in the man, lies behind all that he does, manifests itself therein. If that is known, then all the individual impressions of the man in question will immediately call forth the totality.<sup>4</sup>

The soul is associated with life. Life is manifested in the breath or in the blood for the Hebrews, but the soul is more closely associated with the breath as indicated in Gen. 2:7. There are three terms denoting the "breath-soul" in Hebrew, neshamah (נֶשְׁמָה), nepheesh (נֶפֶשׁ) and ruach (רוּחַ). Neshamah occurs least often and denotes the breath as a



principle of life; as when God breathed into Adam's nostrils (cf. also 1 Kings 17:17; and Job 27:3). Nephesh occurs 754 times and might refer primarily to life (cf. I Kgs. 19:10), or to the soul in its psychological processes, or simply to designate the person (either the speaker or the dead) as a person (cf. Lev. 11:43; 22:11). Ruach occurs 378 times and might mean wind, breath, or spirit, and in some senses is used as a synonym for nephesh when stressing the idea of life as manifested in the breath. It is interesting that the basic word for soul, nephesh, has counterparts in all Semitic languages which are varieties in form of one basic root.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from this basic general meaning of "life", nephesh is also used to cover certain parts or functions of man through which life or the soul is revealed. Such might include the breath (Is. 57:16; 1 Kgs. 15:29; Job 26:4; 32:8; cf. also A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* p. 82 ff.), the throat (used as the location of the breath), the heart (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26), the bowels (Jer. 4:19; Is. 19:3; Ps. 5:10; I Kgs. 3:28), the will (the Hebrews had no word for will, but the idea is present in I Sam. 2:35; II Kgs. 9:15), the desires (Deut. 18:6; Is. 26:8; Ps. 21:3), or the blood (Lev. 17:11; Jer. 2:34; Gen. 9:4; Deut. 12:23). Perhaps it is most significant that the heart ( לֵב ), which often designates the soul with reference to the mind and the character, is interchangeable with nephesh in this sense. Pederson comments,

The heart is the totality of the soul as a character and operating power, particular stress being laid upon its capacity; nephesh is the soul in the sum of its totality, such as it appears; the heart is the soul in its inner values.<sup>6</sup>

The heart is the hidden centre of man over against the face which is the outward register of the heart (Jer. 10:6; Is. 13:8; Ezek. 2:4; Prov. 25:23). This is not only true in an emotional sense, as we tend to think of

it today, but rather these are aspects of the whole man, revealed through the various parts and functions. For the Hebrews the heart was considered the seat of knowledge (Prov. 7:4; Ezra 7:10; II Chr. 30:19; Ezek. 20:32), which came to the heart via the ear (Is. 28:14 "Hear the word of God"). They realized the large part memory plays in intelligence (Eccl. 9:5; Ex. 31:5), hence the heart's receptive function included both conscience and memory. But knowledge must be expressed in the totality of life and personality, hence the heart is man's "operating power".

Since the heart, leb, is considered the centre of knowledge this also includes knowledge of God. If man's heart is hardened or turned away from God, he needs a new heart (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26). The importance of this concept of the heart in understanding the place and function of the soul in the Old Testament is stressed by Jacob:

The heart holds so great a place in Israelite anthropology, it is so far the quintessence of the man, that we may be tempted to assimilate it to nephesh and say: man is a heart. The precise location of the heart prevents our going so far, but at least we can fully subscribe to Dharma's judgment that a 'man is worth what his heart is worth'.

References to the heart of man, then, as with other visceral organs, primarily denotes the inner dynamics of the "living soul", rather than autonomous parts assembled together to construct a man's being.

This Hebrew concept of soul, which includes the total man, the life principle, the dynamic centre, is not necessarily theological, although in the Old Testament it comes in a religious setting. The distinctively theological aspect comes in the notion of the spirit (ruach).<sup>8</sup> The body of flesh (basar) is animated by the spirit to produce the nephesh or soul (Gen. 2:7; 12:5; 14:21; 46:27. Cf. Prov. 12:10 where cattle have souls). We must now inquire whether the ruach is really distinct from the heart, mind, or life principle.

Man's spirit cannot always be kept under control and it is necessary to allow the Spirit of God to tame and possess man's spirit.

When this control is assured to the extent of man's spirit being possessed by God's, spirit becomes the principal religious organ, the seat of the genuinely spiritual facilities. This evolution prepared the ground favourably for an alliance between Greek dualism and Hebrew thought.

Pedersen would argue against any Hebrew-Greek alliance on the grounds that Hebrew concepts of the totality of man and the integration of soul and action would be lost in translation. He argues the dynamic integration of Hebrew thinking processes as it translates abstraction and intention into concrete activity and relationships. The wholeness of the living unity of the individual and the community, resists fragmentation and abstraction which removes the processes from real life. Knowledge and counsel, for example, must issue in wisdom and obedience or they are nothing (Prov. 1:2-4; Ps. 37:30; Job 38:2). A man is responsible for his thinking, his actions, and the result of his action not only for his intentions or principles. Life is seen as one piece. Thinking, dressing, desiring, are all activities of the soul realizing its fulfilment through them, therefore he is responsible for the whole.

Just as man's soul is the integrated whole of his life, so the man's spirit is the director, the vector, of the dynamic force which carries him on to fulfilment. The spirit might motivate the soul with strong emotion. It might carry the soul outside itself with ecstatic experience, such as the experience of the early prophets in Israel, or of Saul as a young man. It might lend unusual power to the person for some purpose, such as when Elijah outran Ahab's carriage.

It is at this point that the distinctively theological aspect enters:



The prophet says that the hand of God comes upon him (II Kgs. 3:15), it seizes him (Is. 8:11). But it does not mean that it is an external force guiding him. God forces him by entering into his soul and filling it; the ruach acting in him is God's. It is called that God's spirit comes upon him (I Sam. 10:6, 10), falls upon him (Ezek. 11:5), enters into him (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), is given in him. The most vivid expression is perhaps that God dons him like a garment (Judg. 6:34; I Chr. 12:19; II Chr. 24:20).<sup>10</sup>

The situation reflected in the Old Testament stands in contrast to the later situation in the New Testament when Greek culture and ideas had penetrated into Palestine. The Hebrews developed their own lines of thought based on their existential experience and insulated from Greek influence until post-exilic times after the conquest of Alexander. Greek power and education, and the use of the LXX no doubt served to introduce Greek culture to the Hebrews, but it was very much of a foreign element in their thinking. Man, for the Hebrews, is a neophesh, a soul, but he has a spirit, a heart, and a mind, etc. In spite of the openness of the spirit to communicate with other spirits in human contact as well as in divine-human encounter, it is still in this context of the dynamic motivator of the soul. Greek thought provided an alternative understanding, but not a synthesis with the Hebrew. Greek analysis of the components of personality resulted in dualistic thinking.<sup>11</sup>

We should note that the term "body" as we use it today is not a Hebrew concept, but has in fact come from the Greek frame of reference. Current usage of the term "flesh", referring to the soft muscle or meat in a narrow sense, is not the usual meaning of basar, but rather "flesh" (body, man, or soul) is intended to convey the idea of an animated body or a soul of flesh and bones. It is extended to include also marriage (one flesh) and kinship (of my flesh) in the O.T. The flesh is associated with that which is transient and weak, but is not considered to be sinful as



such. Since flesh belongs to man as a part of creaturehood, it stands in qualitative contrast to God, who is divine Spirit (cf. Gen. 6:3; Is. 31:3; 40:6; Jer. 12:12). God is a strong Soul who does not have a body of flesh (although He would have an appropriate body just the same).

What is true of the body as a whole is also true of the various parts. The life of the soul is manifested in the body or in some part of it, such as the heart (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26), the blood (Lev. 17:11), the bones (Ps. 35:10; 51:10), the bowels (Ps. 44:26), the reins or loins (Ps. 7:10), the liver (Lam. 2:11), the head (I Sam. 28:2), the eyes (Jer. 21:10), the nose (Job 4:9), the face (Prov. 15:13; 25:23), the hair (II Kgs. 4:32-35). The Hebrew does not deduce a soul from observing the body and its parts, but in the activity of the soul (seeing, walking, etc.) the soul is known.

The weakness of the flesh is associated with the grave. Death strikes the soul when it strikes the body. The soul dies (Judg. 16:30; Num. 23:10; Ezek. 22:25, 27; Job 11:20). The dead body is still the soul, though it is dead (Is. 10:16; Num. 31:19; Josh. 20:3, 9). It is overcome by weakness, and the strength of life has gone (Is. 14:10; 8:19). It is a shadowy existence in Sheol (Num. 6:6; Job 14:22). Respect for dead bodies and proper burial procedures are necessary if the soul is to rest in peace (I Sam. 17:54).

J. A. T. Robinson makes the point that just as it is the body of flesh which separates man from God by means of the qualitative distinction between the creature and his Creator, so it is the body of flesh which establishes human solidarity since men are together in the same "bundle of life":

This is because the body for the Hebrew, like the flesh, is what ties men up with each other, rather than what separates them as individuals. (cf. Hebrews 13: 3 "yourselves also in the body".)<sup>12</sup>

Here he is suggesting that the flesh is a general term, a general substance or category, representing our common humanity. This is not to suggest either a "collective body" or a "collective soul". Human solidarity in the bond of a common humanity must not eclipse the O.T. emphasis on human solidarity and responsibility.

A. R. Johnson points out that the Hebrew mind seeks to grasp things as totalities, including man himself. He says of the term basar:

The conception of man as a psycho-physical organism may be seen equally clearly when one examines the use of the terminology for the various parts of the body. . . . This is even true to a slight degree of the flesh (  $\text{בָּשָׂר}$  /  $\text{בָּשָׂר}$  ), which incidentally is often referred to in such a way as to mark man off as belonging to a different order of being from that of God, and is sometimes clearly used by synecdoche (pars pro toto) for the body itself. . . . Indeed the parallelism with  $\text{אֱדָמָה}$  is occasionally so marked that the use of the term for 'flesh' almost approaches the common use of the former term as a periphrasis for the personal pronoun.<sup>13</sup>

Although the concept of the "bundle of life" is a useful one to bring out social solidarity in the flesh, the flesh is at the same time the basis of our particularity in concrete form. It is our own body.

Another term, Kol basar (all flesh) is used as a technical term for the solidarity of all that is creaturely. A. R. Hulst<sup>14</sup> makes a detailed study of this term, showing that it is used by the priestly writer (P) throughout the Pentateuch and by the prophets of the exile and afterwards. The term includes both man and beasts in such cases as the Noah narrative, in II Isaiah, and in Jeremiah. He suggests that it involves the creatureliness of the whole cosmos as a fallen creation in relation to God, hence it has a liturgical and theological significance and usage. (cf. Oudtesta-

mentische Studien Vol. 12, p. 38ff). Here the Hebrew stress on seeing things in totalities leads to the grouping of all creatures who participate in flesh. The concept of the "bundle of life" would hardly apply here, hence it might be better understood with reference to a covenanted relationship with human solidarity on that basis.

Footnotes to Chapter 8

1. Ronald Gregor Smith, The New Man, (London: S.C.M. 1956) p. 45
2. Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, (New York: Harper & Bros. 1958, trans. from 1955 ed. in German by A. W. Heathcote and F. J. Allcock) p. 157
3. Johs. Pedersen, Israel, (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege 1926, trans. from the Danish ed. of 1920 by Mrs. A. Møller), Vol. I, p. 99
4. Ibid., p. 101
5. Ibid., p. 102
6. Ibid., p. 104
7. Ed. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 166
8. Man is his soul; however he has a heart and a spirit. cf. Pedersen, Israel, Vol. I, p. 104 where he points out: "The heart is the soul as an operating force, and the same holds good of the spirit, ruach. But whereas the heart is at the same time the centre of the soul and the substance gathering round it and determining its strength, the spirit is more particularly the motive power of the soul. It does not mean the centre of the soul, but the strength emanating from it and in its turn, reacting upon it. Man in his totality is a nephesh, but he has a ruach and a heart. The heart and the spirit act upon the centre and urge it in a certain direction toward action."
9. Op cit., p. 163
10. Op cit., Vol. I, p. 160. It follows from Pedersen's description that dreams and visions can also be the vehicles of the divine ruach expanding the soul to receive the message, insight, or Word which is to be incorporated into active reality in the individual or community. Under the influence of the human spirit, the soul is motivated to fulfill the potentialities of the heart. But the divine Spirit can "come upon" a man to enter his soul and to inspire him to erupt or expand the usual limits set by his own heart and spirit.
11. When we consider the soul and the body, we find that any clear distinction which might suggest a dualism between the two does not apply in Hebrew thinking. Rather the unity of soul and body is so close as to make it possible to identify the two. H. W. Robinson comments:  
 "The whole conscious life might have found its explanation along the line of either soul or body; had this contrast been realized dualistically, we should have expected at least that the higher attributes would be assigned to the soul and the lower to the body. But this is distinctly not the case in Hebrew psychology, which can assign the highest intellectual or spiritual activities to the working of a physical organ, and the sensation of animal hunger or sexual passion to the



'soul'. No clearer proof could be given that the term 'Dualism' is inappropriate and misleading in relation to Hebrew psychology." (Christian Doctrine of Man, London: Duckworth Press, p. 21)

12. J. A. T. Robinson, The Body, (London: S.C.M. 1952), p. 29 goes on to examine the phrase "in the body":  
"The characteristic emphasis comes out very plainly in a sentence in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; . . . as being yourselves also in the body . . . in life's bundle together'".
13. A. R. Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual, (Cardiff: U. of Wales), p. 37ff.
14. A. R. Hulst, "Kol Basar", Oudtestamentische Studien, Vol. 12, p. 38ff.

### The Heart of the System

Tillich's doctrine of the human spirit is an attempt to bridge the gap between existence and essence which gap is apparent in his development of the centered self. We noted the "hinge" in his presentation which he related to the doctrine of creation. We noted the tension between man's existential finitude and his essential destiny as image of God. We noted his idea of dimensions of personality which related to his understanding of the spirit. Then in detail we noted how the Hebrew understanding of man reflects man's totality in all his relationships, including the relationship of the human spirit to the personality and of the human spirit to the body, giving an existential basis of interpretation which opposed Greek essentialism. We must inquire whether Tillich's doctrine of the human spirit is not something quite different from the Biblical understanding, as Niebuhr charges, using Biblical language but in fact giving it new meaning in terms of his theological system. A grasp of the system will assist us in this task.

When considering the system we should bear in mind Tillich's use of "symbol". For example, allusion has been made to Tillich's use of the Biblical material as symbolic. His comment on the Fall is helpful to illustrate this:

When a Christian symbol such as the Fall is confronted with philosophies like idealism, naturalism, or neo-Stoicism, one may well ask whether it is possible to relate ideas which lie on different levels, the one on the level of religious symbolism, the other on the level of philosophical concepts. But, as explained in the section on philosophy and theology in the first volume, there is an interpenetration of levels between theology and philosophy. If the idealist or naturalist asserts that 'there is no human predicament', he makes an existential decision about a matter of ultimate concern. In expressing his decision in conceptual terms, he is a theologian. And if the theologian says that existence is estranged from essence, not only does he make an existential decision, but, in expressing it in ontological concepts, he is a philosopher. The philosopher cannot avoid existential decisions, and the theologian cannot avoid

ontological concepts. Although their intentions are opposite, their actual procedures are comparable. This justifies our comparison of the Fall with Western philosophical thought and the alliance of existentialism and theology.<sup>1</sup>

Here the contrast is between the theologian who deals with the existential questions and the philosopher who deals with the essentialist or ontological systematic structures of thought. The Biblical material, in this case the Fall, is clearly in the existential category as grist for the theologian's mill, although with ontological implications for the philosopher's interest. These two "levels" are quite distinct though inter-related at points and these points of interrelationship at which the levels intersect to some extent are what Tillich refers to as "symbols". The symbol addresses both levels. How successfully does he use the idea of spirit as symbol in this sense?

Bearing these questions in mind, we turn to the system as a whole. The holding together of the "coincidentes of opposites" by his method of polarizing balanced elements, setting one over against the other, then synthesizing the two in the principle of identity within a greater unity, is Tillich's main organizational approach to reality for systematic purposes. With each pair of opposites we have a reflection of the basic correlates, the Self-World correlation, which for Tillich is the central problem to which he addresses himself. His methodology, as developed by Schelling for his "dynamic idealism", a form of romanticism, and taken over by Tillich for his own purposes, still retains overtones of its past association.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, Tillich's system has parallels with romantic idealism in his ontological understandings, but modified by the psychological and historical research of the past few decades. Since he attempts to take both poles seriously he reflects the tension between the two when he tries to present a unified system of thought.

The underlying unity for Tillich is in terms of the ontological concern within and embracing both polarities in opposition. At times this is almost a compulsion with him since he refuses to surrender the basic unity, even if he has to distort one or both of the polar positions. Often, however, Tillich alone is the only man who holds these polar positions together in unity, the ground of unity being in his own self. A system of universals, if truly universal, should be evident to more than one man, yet often the pairing is so arbitrary that it appears devised. For example, what is the opposite of anxiety? Is not peace, security, healing, love, and other such elements reflecting wholeness of soul equally as important as courage? What is the opposite of finitude? Is not release, rebirth, forgiveness, liberation, healing, and other such elements reflecting new freedom and direction equally as important as destiny? While there is nothing wrong with the coordinates that Tillich uses in his formulations, they are not necessarily self-evident as universals surely are. Each cluster of ideas which could be thus paired might yield multisided results, some of which might not fit readily into a systematic structure but still be true. Yet Tillich's claim is that these represent ontological reality and can be set forth in a formal system.

In his analysis of the Self-World correlation, Tillich sets out his system in five sections,<sup>3</sup> each addressing an existential question. The five areas of analysis include: 1) human rationality, 2) human finitude, 3) human sin, 4) human selfhood and spirit, and 5) human destiny. The system taken as a whole seeks to answer the theological questions of: Revelation, God, Christ, Holy Spirit, and the Kingdom of God. The answers go far beyond the questions which the doctrine of man poses, acting as but existential "doors" into the theological "house". Some of the polarities that Tillich



uses in developing his system within these five areas of analysis either explicitly or implicitly contain the same sets of coordinates. The Self-World correlation underlies them all. The essentialist-existentialist correlation is built into each discussion in a variety of ways. Likewise the relationship between mankind in general and the individual reoccurs. In fact, his whole system turns on these three basic correlations.

When we consider some of the polarities in Tillich's system, and consider that the three underlying coordinates are also operative, the tension in this method can be seen in such problems as the relation between philosophy and theology. This in particular is Tillich's own problem since he tries to hold both these together in his own life and work. He says:

The divergence between philosophy and theology is counter-balanced by an equally obvious convergence. From both sides converging trends are at work. The philosopher, like the theologian, 'exists', and he cannot jump over the concreteness of his existence and his implicit theology. He is conditioned by his psychological, sociological, and historical situation. And, like every human being, he exists in the power of an ultimate concern, whether or not he is fully conscious of it, whether or not he admits it to himself and to others. There is no reason why even the most scientific philosopher should not admit it, for without an ultimate concern his philosophy would be lacking in passion, seriousness, and creativity. Wherever we look in the history of philosophy, we find ideas and systems which claim to be ultimately relevant for human existence. . . Every creative philosopher is a hidden theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision. . . But the philosopher does not intend to be a theologian. He wants to serve the universal logos. He tries to turn away from his existential situation, including his ultimate concern, toward a place above all particular places, toward pure reality. The conflict between the intention of becoming universal and the destiny of remaining particular characterizes every philosophical existence.<sup>4</sup>

Here, in a word, is the position of a man who is living "on the boundary" (as Tillich's autobiographical portion in Interpretation of History has been entitled,<sup>5</sup> lifting the phrase from Tillich's account of

his own life). Tillich lived with the tension between philosophy and theology.

The ground of unity which conjoins the philosopher and the theologian as polar extremities in correlation is the nature of reason. For Tillich, reason is both subjective (the grasping and shaping functions of the mind) and objective (the logos or order in the world which the mind can grasp). The task of the philosopher is to use his subjective reason in order to grasp reality and to shape it by the application of his mind to problems arising from the objective reason in reality. The task of the theologian is to use his mind to grasp the essential nature of reality and then to shape that reality into a "Gestalt", a living structure which has power of being within itself. This for Tillich is true creativity.

Subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of reality (in whatever way this correspondence may be explained). The description of 'grasping' and 'shaping' in this definition is based on the fact that subjective reason always is actualized in an individual self which is related to its environment and to its world in terms of reception and reaction. The mind receives and reacts. In receiving reasonably, the mind grasps its world; in reacting reasonably, the mind shapes its world. 'Grasping' in this context, has the connotation of penetrating into the depth, into the essential nature of a thing or an event, of understanding and expressing it. 'Shaping', in this context, has the connotation of transforming a given material into a Gestalt, a living structure which has the power of being.<sup>6</sup>

The process for the philosopher and the theologian is one and the same, since the unifying ground is in the nature of reason. Both are seeking universals, the essential nature of reality, and both seek to give expression to this in truth, presented in such a way that it is a living "Gestalt". The differences lie mainly in the place of existential reality for both, and in the type of expression demanded on each in order for it to be a "Gestalt". The actual work of both is in the area of essentialist grasping/shaping. In

this way, Tillich defines his role "on the boundary" between the two, never really deciding between them for himself.

In order to maintain this balance, it is necessary for Tillich to try to rise above and beyond the realm of existential reality. This is the reason he consistently assumes this stance, although he finds it difficult. In dealing with all existential concerns he tries to extract from them what he terms the essential reality and incorporate it into his system. But it is the nature of the existential reality that it cannot be abstracted or else it is lost in the attempt. Hence the basic existential-essential tension, reflecting the Self-World tension, cannot be systematized by the technique of subordinating one side of the polarity to the other.

Tillich's use of the Biblical material reflects his understanding of revelation which, because of his prior commitment to philosophical methodology, leans heavily on the place of reason,<sup>7</sup> albeit his concept is akin to Kant's concept of the aesthetic judgment faculty as the structuring logos of the self, rather than on faith. This tension between revelation as reason and revelation as faith represents a polarity parallel to that of philosophy and theology, but now this is in the existential area rather than in the realm of essence. Revelation is a form of communication. Once again his predisposition toward philosophy tips the scales in the system in the direction of an abstract understanding of revelation linked with reason, producing an attendant neglect of Biblical realism and the struggle of faith involved in hearing the Word of God. By his stress on "spirit" as symbol, the door is opened to this abstract position. The human spirit, which was originally defined in dynamic terms, soon slips into the familiar role of a logos concept of human reason which, Tillich maintains, in fact structures the entire personality.



This is another example of the existential being fitted into the system in an abstracted way, losing its existential nature in the process. Here is a result of his methodology being consistently applied, but the end result does not add to the subject under discussion; rather it subtracts that which makes it real, leaving only a formal relationship within the logic of a system. Revelation for Tillich becomes little more than the correspondence of the structure of the self by means of reason to the structure of being-itself of which the self is represented as a microcosm.

Finitude is the operating category by which the self becomes aware of the limitations to life and the structures of its world, including itself, and the self becomes aware of these limits by means of revelation. By the accepting of the revelation, impressing itself upon the reason whereby the human spirit becomes aware of the nature of reality, of being-itself, and of human limitations and destiny, the self (through the spirit and by the reason faculty) is brought into relation with the Self of the Absolute.

Finitude is set over against revelation<sup>8</sup> within the dynamic interaction of faith, the particularity of selfhood over against the universality of the divine life. One main problem with this analysis is that it is set in the context of a discussion of faith, yet faith hardly enters into the picture except in an almost incidental way. These existential matters are set forth so that they apparently yield ontological conclusions. Furthermore this does not jibe with the Biblical understanding of man as a person in relation with God through faith, faith being the vital characteristic of revelation.

We have seen that the philosophical-theological tension within the unity of reason resulted in the distortion of his methodology to the extent that the solution offered by Tillich was achieved at the expense of his existentialist concerns. Yet he is very much existentially involved in the choice



of this particular solution right from his early life and training, since his search for meaning was to provide the context for all his preaching and teaching. This existential compulsion led him to try to make sense of all the boundary situations in which he found himself. As the Self-World correlation lies behind each of the other polarities, we can see in Tillich's own life an existential search for selfhood, leading to an autobiographical approach<sup>9</sup> to theology and philosophy which from time to time emerges into clear view.

If the polarity between philosophy and theology reflects Tillich's own ontological search in his understanding of the self over against his understanding of the world, the polarity within his system between religion and faith reflects his existential concern also. Experience of a deep and spiritual nature characterized the man Paul Tillich, impressing all who met him.<sup>10</sup> His search for faith in, through, and beyond religion is an example of the polarity referred to at this point. When we considered his concept of God above the gods of religion, we had an example of this polarity seeking a greater unity in the realm of the spirit.

It is not enough to say that religion for Tillich represents the social dimension and faith the personal. Both religion and faith go beyond that. Religion<sup>11</sup> represents everything from his childhood: the entire Christian tradition including culture, doctrine, liturgy, art, learning, and so on. On the cultural side religion shares the stage with history, psychology, sociology, and other human pursuits in a wholeness of life. On the creedal side religion is symbolic to men, according to Tillich, not useful in itself, but in terms of the personal mysticism and social escape generated. Religion is a part of human experience but it is limited to certain levels of self-actualization. Like philosophy, it is a useful tool, but having used it it must be transcended.

In this way religion is fitted into his ontological framework of thought. It becomes a symbol.

I seriously doubt if religion can be as neatly classified as that. Religion is a whole range of activities, institutions, attitudes, associations and experiences. To generalize under a definition which must be too narrow to meet the existential realities is to mock the reality. Tillich exemplifies the width of the range of religion, including the whole cultural context, yet his definitions do not reflect this actual range.

Religion must be transcended according to Tillich and this is to be achieved through ontological thinking and development. Yet religion is existentially alive for Tillich since it is the basis upon which his whole system is founded. If religion is but one level of human life it is a lively level motivating ordinary people and theologians alike to a consuming passion. Since religion is for Tillich much more than just liturgy or philosophy of religion, although each of these is a large segment of Christian experience, it is the ground for many of the existential problems and experience which address themselves to matters of faith and action. In many ways the distinction between religion and faith is an artificial one since they are bound closer together than the method of polarisation practically allows. They may or may not be in tension; therefore, they are not true opposites.

Faith for Tillich does have a place of honour in his system,<sup>12</sup> however, even if it cannot compete with philosophy according to his methodological commitment. Faith does represent the relation of the centered self over against the threat of anxiety, which denies the centeredness of the self, and provides the courage to affirm life on the strength of having been accepted by the ground of being-itself. This tension between anxiety and courage is within the greater unity of finitude and issues in faith when this tension is transcended. Faith is not primarily a relationship for Tillich, whether to the Word of God or to the New Being in Christ, but it is a participation in the divine life<sup>13</sup>

whereby the self might manifest the Self. This is possible by the spirit of man relating to the Spirit of God.

For the spirit to be understood as a symbol, the man of faith is seen to be engaged in an existential struggle to be properly centered or integrated in order for him to be in a position to transcend himself. The only guarantee that this is possible is that the human spirit is the highest order of being in the creation, ontologically built into human nature as the true potential of everyman. The fact of the inadequacy of the human spirit to have value in its own right is suggested by the process and the need for self-transcendence. Since the divine Spirit deals directly with the human spirit, without Christ, the Bible, or the Church (these may or may not be useful as symbols to faith), faith for Tillich in the end is a process of psychological integration of the personality and right thinking of the mind. Just as revelation in effect becomes a function of philosophy, so faith as the existential expression of revelation becomes a function of psychology without any particular content, Christian or otherwise. The logic of this position takes us beyond the point where Tillich himself stood, since he was existentially committed to the Christian faith in spite of the system.

In each of the polarities within the system there exists tension. But this tension is not only that of the nature of the polar elements themselves, it is also a tension which reflects the basic coordinates underlying the whole system. The polarities have been chosen by Tillich so that they might be discussed in a parallel way on an existentialist level. This he does consistently and this makes the system what it is. But this deeper tension between the Self-World interaction which defies essentialist classification because of the existential nature of the self is ever real and present. It gives the note of



unreality to a purely essentialist discussion about the nature of things which exist. The system as a formal classification of relationships has its merit, but it claims too much. Tillich does not see this basic contradiction between his professed interest in ontology and his real involvement in the self at a level and to a degree that he cannot simply abstractly define his way out of it, remaining in effect detached or transcendent as he would like to think he can do.

We have tried to consider the heart of the system in terms of the basic relationships dealt with: Self-World, Philosophy-Theology, Revelation-Finitude, and Religion-Faith. We have not considered doctrines within the system which have a bearing on the way these relationships are worked out, but we will consider two of these: the Self, and the New Being, in the next chapters. Meanwhile there is one other relationship which we should consider and that is the relationship between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. As pointed out before, this for Tillich is a basic symbol within the system.

The spirit of man, including the reason, is an existential reality which is the dynamic of the self making a man self-conscious and capable of rising to the heights as the image of God. This element of the Self keeps the self from becoming abstract. In spite of the philosophical description of the self and its potentiality it is the spirit which gives it life. All the relationships of life are meaningful only as the spirit is involved. Otherwise, the Self is a creature of definition and speculation.

The same word is used of God. He too is described as Spirit. He too is creative, living, dynamic, actualizing, and real. The same type of language is used, suggesting that the divine Spirit also is an existential reality. But it is at this point that Tillich reflects the basic contradiction which he has not resolved within himself between thinking and becoming; since



he defines the divine Spirit as pure essence which actualizes itself in existence. Even by his concept of symbol he cannot overcome this contradiction which shifts the meaning of words and ideas associated with spirit across the gap.

Footnotes to Chapter 9

1. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume II, p. 30-31, cf. Vol. III, p. 111
2. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 147-155, 118

Revelation overcomes the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy by re-establishing their essential unity. . . Final revelation includes two elements which are decisive for the reunion of autonomy and heteronomy, the complete transparency of the ground of being in the bearer of the final revelation. . . The presence of the divine ground as it is manifest in Jesus as the Christ gives a spiritual substance to all forms of rational creativity.  
(p. 147)

This is but an example of the dynamic idealism reflected in the language of Tillich as he develops his idea of the ground of unity in essential being.

cf. Kenneth Hamilton, The System and the Gospel, (London: SCM 1963) p. 176. Here Hamilton compares the method and approach of Tillich with that of John Dewey, who speaks as a naturalist, on the subject of revelation indicating that Tillich shares such ground with the approach of naturalism. Romanticism blends both idealism and naturalism in various ways.

3. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 66      cf. also III, p. 40
4. Ibid., I, p. 24-25
5. Paul Tillich, On the Boundary, (London: Collins, 1967)
6. Op cit., I, p. 76
7. Ibid., I, p. 75ff
8. Ibid., I, p. 191 The power of infinite self-transcendence is an expression of man's belonging to that which is beyond nonbeing, namely to being-itself. . . Being-itself manifests itself to finite being in the infinite drive of the finite beyond itself.
9. Paul Tillich, On the Boundary, p. vii (Introduction by J. H. Thomas)
10. Ibid., p. xvii
11. Ibid., p. 68ff
12. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. III, p. 130ff
13. Ibid., III, p. 111

## The Self in the System

Tillich's quest for an adequate doctrine of the Self, so frequently frustrated by the very abstruse quality of his theologizing which loses the Self in generalities and abstractions, carried through into the final and definitive definition set forth in the third volume of his systematics published just two years before his death. In his first volume where he sets forth his methodology, the Self-World correlation became the basis of his ontology, but the priority of the Self is hinted at in such phrases as "Man is a Self who has a world."<sup>1</sup> Much space and effort is given to the exploration of the world, but in the end the world is seen as having meaning and value only when it is grasped and shaped by human reason, a function of the Self in its life process.

When he proceeds to volume two, the grasping-shaping function is seen in a struggle to maintain meaning and value in life over against the great existential factors at work which mitigate against the unity of life and of the Self. Existentially man experiences estrangement from God, from his world, and even from his Self. Hence his concept of the New Being, in Jesus the Christ, is seen as a part of the struggle for Selfhood. Perhaps Tillich achieved only limited success in his interpretation, but the central theme, the search for Selfhood, has dominated both volumes.

Now in volume three he turns to set forth his doctrine of the Self in a systematic way. In a very real sense this doctrine has been the operative basis of the entire systematics, every other doctrine simply providing a context of meaning and relationship for the understanding of the Self. We have noticed at several places that the existential and the ontological aspects of his thought are at odds, represented as separate poles in a great number of relationships, and held together in Tillich's mind by

a ground of unity which he terms the principle of identity. When we look back and see that the doctrine of the Self holds such a place of priority, yet in the discussion the ontological aspects are intellectualized as holding the place of priority, we can see that the Self-World conflict was indeed real inside Tillich's own mind. But having laid out the bulk of his system in systematic form, he now turns to deal with the Self. We can best make sense of his systematic method by noticing that he has been providing us with a context of thought against which we are to understand the doctrine of the Self, but the Self is the operating heart of the system.

It is a curious thing that Tillich is preoccupied with the doctrine of the Self throughout his lifetime, yet he exhibits a suspicion of the existential manifestations of the Self, preferring a theoretical approach. It is curiously parallel to the great love that Kierkegaard professed for his fiancée yet in spite of his existential theorizing could never rise to translating that professed love into a concrete marriage relationship. It is this type of treatment of his subject matter that leads me to suggest that Tillich was really shy and uncertain when it came to his search for selfhood, yet his preoccupation with this search meant that he had a tremendous personal investment in its outcome. In this sense the whole of the three volumes become Tillich's search for identity, more than his search for ontology. His theology can be read as autobiographical material. This personal investment would account for his backing away from concrete material, as we noticed that he did time and again, in his attempt to be objective and to compensate for his existential concern.

Tillich begins his formal discussion by focusing on the term spirit as the dynamic principle operating in the "totally centered self". He tried to maintain the unity of life by describing the process of actualiza-



tion of human personality focusing in the dimension of spirit as personal centre. The freedom of the "totally centered self" moves, according to Tillich, within the process of actualization to the fulfilment or actualization of the potential within itself. This is the function of life. He then distinguishes three functions of life, namely self-integration under the principle of centeredness, self-creation under the principle of growth, and self-transcendence under the principle of sublimity. Each of these three functions he describes in terms of the tensions within certain polarities, and the whole process of self-identity and self-alteration is rooted in the basic self-world correlation. Within the whole process of actualization there is the very real danger of existential distortion at each and every stage, hence the presence of ambiguity right in the life process itself.

By "centeredness" Tillich does not mean "whole" or "Gestalt", since he has in mind the model of a circle for the structure of the self with particular focus in the "centre". While Gestalt has a similar kind of model in view, the focus however is on the perimeter of an integrated "whole". He is suggesting that various forces converge on a "centre" and it is these forces which interact to direct the life processes. Such a centre is but a point of convergence, not a distinct entity.

With this understanding of integration, the possibility of disintegration is very real through participation in concrete situations. Failure to achieve integration can occur two ways:

Either it is the inability to overcome a limited, stabilized, immovable centeredness, in which case there is a center, but which does not have a life process whose content is changed and increased; thus it approaches the death of mere self-identity. Or it is the inability to return because of the dispersing power of the manifoldness, in which case there is life, but it is dispersed and weak in centeredness, and it faces the danger of losing its center altogether - the death of mere self-alteration. The function of self-

integration ambiguously mixed with disintegration<sup>2</sup> works between these two extremes in every life process.

He then discusses the power of disintegration in terms of health and disease at the organic level including psychological disorders, showing how the processes of disintegration can threaten self-integration. Then in terms of the spiritual level he discusses morality. "Morality is the function of life by which the realm of the spirit comes into being."<sup>3</sup> Through morality, Tillich maintains that the centered self constitutes itself as a person. He does not see the moral act as an act of obedience, but as a decision which actualizes the personal. Such moral decision must be constantly renewed in the life process. Without moral decision man relates only to his environment, but through morality man relates to his world, transcending his environment as such. Such transcendence of environment is to rise to the spiritual level.

In this line of approaching moral decision, the question then must be faced as to the nature of moral imperative. Is this completely relative? Tillich attempts his answer in terms of the relation of one person to another person. How a self relates to another self as personal is his point:

The encounter with another person implies the unconditional command to acknowledge him as a person. The validity of the moral imperative is basically experienced in such encounters . . . The question - Who is my neighbour? - with all its problems remains valid because of the one answer given by Jesus in the story of the Good Samaritan. This answer shows that the abstract notion of 'acknowledging the other one as a person' becomes concrete only in the notion of participating in the other one (which follows from the ontological polarity of individualization and participation). Without participation one would not know what 'other self' means; no empathy discerning the difference between a thing and a person would be possible. Even the word 'thou' in the description of the ego-thou encounter could not be used, because it implies the participation that is present whenever one addresses somebody as a person. . .

It certainly cannot be a participation in the particular characteristics . . . The moral imperative demands that one self participate in the center of the other self and consequently accept his particularities even if there is no convergence between the two individuals as individuals. This acceptance of the other self by participating in his personal center is the core of love in the sense of agape, the New Testament term.<sup>4</sup>

It is baffling how one point of convergence of a number of dynamic factors, according to Tillich's model of the centered self, which rise with power to actualize the spiritual dimension or personal in one individual can relate to another such point of convergence in another individual and call it love in the New Testament sense. It is obvious that he is using the term 'self' in at least two ways here if not three. The integrating centre or focus is the non-substantive location of the self. The actualized and spiritually developed power centre of the person is the self in another sense. Then the morally developed person whose decisions are not forced by obedience but by freedom which transforms law and obedience (yet does in fact respond to the moral imperative), this self is able to relate to other such selves in love (but the mutuality of this love is not explored so that there is not actual support for the suggestion that this personal self can relate only to other personal selves).

His example of the Good Samaritan, unfortunately, muddies the water even further. Certainly the usual reading of the parable suggests that the Samaritan participated in the external circumstances of the wayside victim, without regard to the dynamics of personality and society which constituted the responses of the others along the road, simply out of a human compassion which was more primitive than the conditioned responses. It is difficult to argue that the Samaritan was affirming the man's personhood at the expense of his Jewishness (a vital part of his identity) because



this implicitly is to deny his personhood under the cloak of a generality. It is more to the point to argue that the Samaritan accepted the full personhood, including his Jewishness, of the man and that agape love has something to do with bridging this unbridgable gap. The affirmation of personhood is the result rather than the definition of agape love. And for this reason the key to the parable is the person of Christ, who has done just this through His incarnation and atonement.

When he turns to discuss self-creativity as dynamics and growth, which follows on after the dimension of self-integration, Tillich makes the following distinction:

Self-integration constitutes the individual being in its centeredness; self-creation gives the dynamic impulse which drives life from one centered state to another under the principle of growth. Centeredness does not imply growth, but growth does presuppose coming from and going to a state of centeredness. Likewise, disintegration is possible, but not necessarily destructive. . . takes place within a centered unity.)

Under the heading of self-creativity he discussed many of the factors which impinge upon the self, mainly originating in the social environment, which stimulate growth by causing the centered self to rise to new levels of equilibrium. In grappling with technology, culture, and humanistic education the individual must transcend them or face disintegration. This is the weakness of each and the strength of the individual self, that the self can go on to rise to self-transcendence.

When he turns to discuss self-transcendence he makes use of geometric models once again:

Life, in degrees, is free from itself, from a total bondage to its own finitude. It is striving in the vertical direction toward ultimate and infinite being. The vertical transcends both the circular line of centeredness and the horizontal line of growth. In the words of Paul (Rom. 8: 19-22), the longing of all creation for the liberation from the 'sub-



jection to futility' (R.S.V.) and 'the shackles of mortality' (N.E.B.) is described with a profound poetic empathy. These words are a classical expression of the self-transcendence of life under all dimensions.<sup>6</sup>

To help us conceptualize what he means by self-transcendence, Tillich suggests that the idea of greatness and dignity used as a qualitative term conveys this notion. It suggests a power of being, perhaps reflecting in some way ultimate being and meaning in life. Greatness implies risk since the bounds of finitude are challenged in this freedom. It broaches the question of mystery since it penetrates beyond finitude. It has overtones of the awe of the holy since it reflects the absolute.

Such greatness implied by self-transcendence contains a sense of dignity.

Self-transcendence in the sense of greatness implies self-transcendence in the sense of dignity. It might seem that this term belongs exclusively to the personal-communal realm because it presupposes complete centeredness and freedom. But one element of dignity is inviolability, which is a valid element of all reality, giving dignity to the inorganic as well as to the personal. The sense in which life in the personal realm is inviolable lies in the unconditional demand of a person to be acknowledged as a person. Although it is technically possible to violate anybody, morally it is impossible because it violates the violator and destroys him morally.<sup>7</sup>

Such greatness is achieved through the dimension of self-awareness, a characteristic which marks man off from the rest of the created order.

Under the dimension of self-awareness, self-transcendence has the character of intentionality; to be aware of one's self is a way of being beyond one's self. The subject-element in all life becomes a subject, and the object-element in all life becomes an object - something that is thrown opposite the subject (ob-jectum). The greatness of this event in the history of nature is tremendous, and so is the new dignity following from it. The state of being beyond one's self in terms of self-awareness, even the most rudimentary, is a mark of greatness surpassing that in all preceding dimensions. . . . It is not the dimension of the spirit which is here referred to but that of self-awareness, which, however, reaches into the dimensions both of the organic and of the spirit.<sup>8</sup>

These are the degrees of life which stretch upward vertically towards the transcendence of life under the dimension of the spirit, which for Tillich is his definition of religion. The end of self-integration is morality; the end of self-creativity is culture; and the end of self-transcendence is religion. This is the pathway to self-actualization.

Another way of approaching this process is through Tillich's analysis of the dynamics of faith which he sets out in a book by that title (*The Dynamics of Faith*, 1957). By discussing faith as the central act around which the process of self-transcendence takes place, the process can be seen in a light other than a chance progression by the self-enlightened few who manage to attain to it. It is necessary to introduce this concept of faith at this point to relieve Tillich of the charge of neglecting to describe just how this process is achieved.

Faith is a total and centered act of the personal self, the act of unconditional, infinite and ultimate concern. The question now arises: what is the source of this all-embracing and all-transcending concern? The word 'concern' points to two sides of a relationship, the relation between the one who is concerned and his concern. In both respects we have to imagine man's situation in itself and in his world. The reality of man's ultimate concern reveals something about his being, namely, that he is able to transcend the flux of relative and transitory experiences of his ordinary life. . . . Man is able to understand in an immediate personal and central act the meaning of the ultimate, the unconditional, the absolute, the infinite. This alone makes faith a human potentiality.

Human potentialities are powers that drive toward actualization. Man is driven toward faith by his awareness of the infinite to which he belongs, but which he does not own like a possession. This is in abstract terms what concretely appears as the 'restlessness of the heart' within the flux of life. . . .

The term 'ultimate concern' unites the subjective and the objective side of the act of faith - the fides qua creditur (the faith through which one believes) and the fides quae creditur (the faith which is believed). The first is the classical term for the centered act of the personality, the ultimate concern. The second is the classical term for

that toward which this act is directed, the ultimate itself, expressed in symbols of the divine. This distinction is very important, but not ultimately so, for the one side cannot be without the other. There is no faith without a content toward which it is directed. There is always something meant in the act of faith. And there is no way of having the content of faith except in the act of faith. . . .

The same experience expressed in abstract language is the disappearance of the ordinary subject-object scheme in the experience of the ultimate, the unconditional. In the act of faith that which is the source of this act is present beyond the cleavage of subject and object. It is present as both and beyond both.<sup>9</sup>

Thus self-transcendence for Tillich through the dimension of the spirit rises by the dynamics of faith to complete the circle of unity with the Absolute as he learned it from Schelling. The principle of identity with the absolute by the individual spirit finally removes all contradictions even though the pathway has been strewn with existential hazards, forces, and ambiguities. For Tillich the relationship between man and the absolute has never been destroyed, the potential is there to be developed, and the rise through the various stages of progress in life is open to all. Faith is essentially the experience of opening oneself to the Absolute, of developing the power of the personal spirit, of actualizing the self. He began by subordinating all aspects of human personality to spirit, now spirit is related to Spirit by the principle of identity with the resulting disappearance of the subject-object cleavage.

Footnotes to Chapter 10

1. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) Vol. I, p. 243
2. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), Vol. III, p. 33, 34
3. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 38
4. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 45
5. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 51
6. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 86, 87
7. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 89
8. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 91, 92
9. Paul Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957) p. 8-11



## The New Being in the System

Tillich's distinction between the idea of personality and the ideal of personality which he expounded in "The Protestant Era" as we have seen, has a parallel in the doctrine of the Self. We have pointed out the distinction between the self as known and experienced over against the Self, as conceived and manifested in its essential nature. At another level, however, we can see how Tillich distinguishes the Self as set forth in his system as an analysis of everyman's condition, over against the Self as the realization of the full potentiality of being manifested in and through the "New Being". Apparently this concept of the "New Being" is not identical with the Self as expounded, although in many ways it is the fulfilment of the Self as it should be in all its relationships and potentialities. The "New Being" in this one sense is the Self which has transcended selfhood so as to achieve true Selfhood. In this sense, therefore, the "New Being" is the goal of all human life.

As Tillich addresses himself to explain the "New Being", which he always identifies with Christology, we are left with the dilemma of whether he is expanding the doctrine of the Self to include Jesus Christ as the paragon of Selfhood, or whether he is accommodating his Christology to the terminology and direction of his system. In either case we are left with the puzzling question as to what he really means by the "New Being".

J. H. Thomas points out the logical difficulties in this concept:

We must now seek to understand what Tillich means when he talks of Christ as the bringer of the New Being. In other words, how does he understand the 'meaning' of the Incarnation? . . . The New Being in Jesus as the Christ is expressed in his whole being, and neither his words nor his deeds nor his sufferings nor yet his 'inner life' make him the Christ. These are all expressions of the New Being which is the quality of his being. . .

The first question that must surely cry out for an answer is - What kind of concept is that of the New Being? When I attended his lectures in 1953 I asked him about this and explained that it seemed to me that if one spoke of it as a class concept then one would have to say that it was a class which had only one member. There is nothing wrong in this because one can in the same way speak of 'God' as a one-member class. However, Tillich's reply was that he was more Platonic than I was and did not accept this Aristotelian logic. Therefore he would describe the New Being as neither genus nor species but a power. This suggests to me that Tillich is not clear about the logical status of his key Christological concept.

Moreover, if the 'New Being' is the 'power of Jesus Christ which conquers estrangement' are we to understand that for Tillich the assertion that Jesus is the Christ is nothing more than an explanatory hypothesis? This cannot be the case; for Tillich regards the 'New Being' as almost synonymous with 'Christ'. In the context of this discussion . . . the assertion 'Jesus is the Christ because he is the bearer of the New Being' could properly be described as a tautology. It seems difficult to resist the conclusion that in this translation of the classical Christology, Tillich has achieved a rendering which can also only be understood by reading the original. For if one tries to understand it from within the system one meets hopeless confusion in the use of the term 'being' to denote the essential existence of God (if not indeed to 'name' God) and also to denote reality. What Tillich means to say about Jesus when he talks about the New Being, the New Testament says with just as much clarity by means of the proclamation that the Kingdom of God has come, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.<sup>1</sup>

It is curious the way Tillich uses the term 'Christ' as a category or class in an Aristotelian sense while denying that 'New Being' can be used in this sense. He becomes almost mystical in his concept of Being with the manifestations of Being taking on this semi-mystical aura as he speaks of 'New Being', 'ground of being', or 'Being itself'. Perhaps his definition of New Being as power does in fact come closer to his perception of Being, while logically this yields a very unsatisfactory definition. It is almost as if Tillich here is using a concept of dimensions of Being as the basis for his distinctions, while his discussion centres on manifestations of Being which can then be described using logical terminology, i.e., Being in the

dimension of 'New Being' becomes manifested in Jesus who can as a result be classified as the 'Christ'. The term 'Christ' therefore refers to a qualitative difference of the being of Jesus which is more than the self-transcendence leading to true Selfhood, although the manifestation of the 'New Being' in Jesus Christ would include this.

With this semantic problem in mind we should now turn to see how Tillich relates his doctrine of the New Being to his system. For him this is the high point of the whole system to which it all points. I feel, however, that in the end of the day he uses his Christology as the grand example of how the Self-World polarity is held together, if not resolved, within one person, Jesus of Nazareth. Since these underlying problems are never resolved, we are never sure whether Jesus is the highest example of human Selfhood, one among many, or unique (and if so in what ways).

The way out of our existential estrangement from God and from our world and even from ourselves is, for Tillich, in and through the New Being. In his collection of sermons under the heading "The New Being", published in 1956, he expresses the gospel in these terms:

This is the message: A new reality has appeared in which you are reconciled. To enter the New Being we do not need to show anything. We must only be open to be grasped by it, although we have nothing to show. Being reconciled - that is the first mark of the New Reality. And being reunited is its second mark. Reconciliation makes reunion possible. The New Creation is the reality in which the separation is reunited. The New Being is manifest in the Christ because in Him the separation never overcame the unity between Him and God, between Him and mankind, between Him and Himself. . . . In Him we look at a human life that maintained the union in spite of everything that drove Him into separation. He represents and mediates the power of the New Being because <sup>2</sup>He represents and mediates the power of the undisrupted union.

Tillich supports his contention that Jesus is the Christ and therefore the bearer of the New Being by a discussion of the paradoxical. For him the paradox is the new reality in Christ whereby this man can be in Himself the



New Being and thus represent to all men what God intends man should be. He is mediator and saviour in this sense.

He does not represent man to God but shows what God wants man to be. He represents to those who live under the conditions of existence what man essentially is and therefore ought to be under these conditions. . . It is essential man who represents not only man to man but God to man; for essential man, by his very nature, represents God. He represents the original image of God embodied in man, but he does so under the conditions of estrangement between God and man. . . The paradox of the Christian message is that in one personal life essential manhood has appeared under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them.<sup>3</sup>

For Tillich, Jesus of Nazareth can be called the Christ in that He is the one who brings in the new state of things, the New Being heralding the New Creation. He is the one man who fulfilled or actualized his potential self, rising in the power of the spiritual to self-transcendence and maintaining unity with the ground of His being, with his world, and with Himself. It is important for Tillich that the historic Jesus be seen in this perspective. His Christhood is not suprahistoric, nor a theological appendage granted by Christian piety and tradition years later, nor again is it supernatural as in the case of a demigod. His Christhood is, for Tillich, to be understood in historic terms, as the expression of the paradox of His being which is the one sample par excellence of true humanity, the realization of the potential in every man.

He goes into great detail in his Christology showing that Jesus is set forth in the Gospels as one who experienced all the anxieties of finitude, all the conflicts of existential estrangement, all the contradictions of the human predicament, without yielding to the temptations of hubris or concupiscence. Jesus accepted the limitations of His own finitude, always yielding to the Father's will even to the end. Tillich feels that the term "sinlessness of Jesus" is misleading since it holds a negative and legalistic



connotation, whereas the sacrifice of Jesus in the overcoming of man's estrangement is a positive and dynamic struggle. He is good in that He participates in the goodness of God. He is free also in this sense. In the existential struggle He consistently maintains this unity with God.<sup>4</sup>

The way in which the New Being is manifested in Jesus as the Christ so as to overcome the existential estrangement of the human situation is not to be confused with the development of man's potential within existence itself as if man and nature have fallen from good to evil and that choice is ever before man. For Tillich the transition from essence to existence is not an event in time and space but is transhistorical. Essence refers to potential. Existence is the only reality under which man and nature can operate. There never were and never will be any other conditions of existence, and the tragic dimension or "element of destiny" in existence includes estrangement. He says:

If estrangement were based only on the responsible decisions of the individual person, each individual could always either contradict or not contradict his essential nature. There would be no reason to deny that people could avoid and have avoided sin altogether. This was the Pelagian view, even if Pelagius had to admit that bad examples influence the decisions of free and responsible individuals. There is no such thing as 'bondage of the will' in this view. The tragic element of man's predicament, manifest from earliest infancy, is disregarded. In the Christian tradition men like Augustine, Luther and Calvin have rejected this view. Pelagian ideas were rejected by the early church, and semi-Pelagian ideas, which have become strong in the medieval church, were rejected by the Reformers. The neo-Pelagian ideas of contemporary moralistic Protestantism are rejected by neo-orthodox and existentialist theologians. Christianity knows and can never give up its knowledge of the tragic universality of existential estrangement. This means, however, that Christianity must reject the idealistic separation of an innocent nature from guilty man. Such a rejection has become comparatively easy in our period because of the insights gained about the growth of man and his relation to nature within and outside himself.<sup>5</sup>

Tillich goes on to argue that freedom is not absolute or indeterminate as the Pelagian position suggests since man lives under the conditions

of existence. But on the other hand the tragic element in human destiny is not absolute or determinate as the Manichaeism position suggests, since freedom is possible for the personality unified and centered in the act of decision. In this way the New Being was manifested in Jesus to overcome estrangement.

Tillich rejects the traditional way of developing Christology by distinguishing between the person and the work of Christ. He feels that the concept of the New Being encompasses all since it is the New Being which makes Jesus the Christ.

Many of the semimechanistic mistakes in the doctrine of salvation could have been avoided if the principle had been accepted that the being of the Christ is his work and that his work is his being, namely, the New Being which is his being. . . The significance of Jesus as the Christ is his being; and the prophetic, priestly, and royal elements in it are immediate consequences of his being (besides several others), but they are not special 'offices' connected with his 'work'. Jesus as the Christ is the Saviour through the universal significance of his being as the New Being.<sup>6</sup>

The work of Christ, then, for Tillich is manifestation. Revelation and salvation are one and the same activity. Christ is Saviour in this sense.

The term Mediator is likewise related to revelation rather than to atonement.

A third kind of being between God and man would be a half-god. Exactly this was rejected in the Arian heresy. In Christ the eternal God-Man unity has appeared under the conditions of existence. The Mediator is not a half-god. . . . God reveals himself to us and reconciles us to him through the Mediator. God is always the one who acts, and the Mediator is the one through whom he acts.<sup>7</sup>

The manifestation of the New Being in Jesus involves the universal significance of the eternal dimension in the person of the bearer of the New Being. Yet the relationship between the Christhood of Jesus and the

particularity of the man Jesus can only be represented symbolically according to Tillich, and this is the key to understanding the incarnation and the atonement, the virgin birth and the resurrection. History and eternity must be distinguished. Christologies which attempt to hold both dimensions together are considered inadequate by Tillich, doing violence to both Jesus' humanity and God Himself.

While the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem belongs to the symbols corroborating the Cross, the story of the virgin birth belongs to the symbols corroborating the Resurrection. It expresses the conviction that the divine Spirit who has made the man Jesus of Nazareth into the Messiah has already created him as his vessel, so that the saving appearance of the New Being is independent of historical contingencies and dependent on God alone. It is the same motif which led to the Logos Christology, even though it belongs to another line of thought. The factual element in it is that historical destiny determined the bearer of the New Being, even before his birth. But the actual story is a myth, the symbolic value of which must be seriously questioned. It points toward the docetic-monophysite direction of Christian thinking and is itself an important step in it. By excluding the participation of a human father in the procreation of the Messiah, it deprives him of full participation in the human predicament.<sup>8</sup>

Tillich feels that ideas of incarnation are linked with adoptionistic approaches to Christology, having Biblical roots no doubt, but are inadequate to express clearly who Jesus is as the Christ. In this he has more trouble than did his mentor Schelling over the term incarnation, but he does allow that it might have limited, though carefully guarded, use:

When Christianity uses the term 'Incarnation' it tries to express the paradox that he who transcends the universe appears in it and under its conditions. In this sense every Christology is an incarnational Christology. But the connotation of the term leads to ideas which can hardly be distinguished from pagan transmutation myths. If the egeneto in the Johannine sentence, Logos sarx egeneto, the 'Word became flesh', is pressed, we are in the midst of a mythology of metamorphosis. And it is natural that the question should arise concerning how something which becomes something else can remain at the same time what it is. . . . The Incarnation of the Logos is not metamorphosis but his



total manifestation in a personal life. But manifestation in a personal life is a dynamic process involving tensions, risks, dangers, and determination by freedom as well as by destiny. This is the adoption side, without which the Incarnation accent would make unreal the living picture of the Christ. . . . As Protestantism asserts the justification of the sinner, so it demands a Christology of the participation of the Christ in sinful existence, including at the same time, its conquest. . . . It is the paradox of God accepting a world which rejects him.<sup>9</sup>

Here we have come to the pivotal point in Tillich's Christology.

How the two "natures" are related is a paradox. Jesus of Nazareth is truly human, sharing a common humanity with the whole race under common conditions of existence. Jesus the Christ is the New Being manifesting eternal life by God's Spirit, and thereby becoming the Mediator of divine revelation as universal Saviour.<sup>10</sup> Either we must consider him as universal Christ focusing upon his identity with God, the ground of all being, revelation of the eternal dimension which is the goal of all men; or we must consider him as historical human Jesus, our example of man fulfilling his divine calling. Otherwise all being is one.

Tillich's concept of Jesus as being the bearer of the New Being suggests that Jesus in and of himself is not to be identified as the New Being, but that the New Being is something distinct from the humanity of Jesus. The New Being is actualized in its Christly manifestation, and apart from this manifestation it remains but potentiality. Yet this potentiality might have been actualized in other men, indeed in all men of the faith to some extent. In this sense, then, the New Being is more a dimension of life or being rather than a "nature" such as Christ's divinity is generally considered to be in traditional theology. It is of the dimension of divine Spirit which is the ground of unity for Tillich as being itself, yet as essential life only becomes existential through intercourse



with the right human spirit. Tillich's consistent distinction between the ontological and the existential is reflected in his Christology in this paradox between Jesus and the Christ, with the New Being concept used as a bridge. But in the end the New Being must be located in terms of the Christly potential not the human Jesus. For this reason it must be seen as Revelation from God and good news for men.

Tillich is not happy with this location of the New Being on one side of the paradox, since he intends that it should be a bridge to explain how Jesus participates fully in both humanity and in divinity. He is not prepared to take a pantheistic position and identify all being in the divine. He does recognize that there is a difference, but it is a difference between the ontological and the existential unified in a common ground of being, rather than a qualitative difference as such. His commitment to a given unity, however, coupled with his denial of pantheism, does leave the door open to the dominance of the existential. Man and nature do exist after all. If there is anything beyond man and nature it must indeed come by revelation. This revelation, moreover, Tillich says is open to everyman, as the New Being is the actualization of essential humanity. This sounds like God-consciousness very similar to the teaching of Schleiermacher.

In contrasting his view with that of Schleiermacher, Tillich has an interesting passage which is quite revealing. The parallel is striking:

Some traits of the christological position taken here are similar to Schleiermacher's Christology, as developed in his Glaubenslehre. He replaces the two-nature doctrine by a doctrine of a divine-human relation. He speaks of a God-consciousness in Jesus, the strength of which surpasses the God-consciousness of all other men. He describes Jesus as the Urbild ('original image') of what man essentially is and from which he has fallen. The similarity is obvious; but it is not identity. . . The phrase 'essential unity between God and man' has an ontological character; Schleiermacher's God-consciousness has an anthropological character. . . In Urbild

the idealistic transcendence of true humanity over human existence is clearly expressed, while in 'New Being', the participation of him who is also the Urbild ('essential man') is decisive. The New Being is new not only over against existence but also over against essence, in so far as essence remains mere potentiality. The Urbild remains unmoved above existence; the New Being participates in existence and conquers it. Here again an ontological element makes the difference.<sup>11</sup>

Schleiermacher and Tillich come at the two-nature doctrine from opposite sides of the street, as it were. Schleiermacher begins with the human spirit and the particular receptivity that faith gives in terms of dependency and God-consciousness. Tillich begins with the divine essence and seeks to show how the New Being becomes manifest existentially in the historical Jesus through full participation in the human situation by overcoming existential estrangement and maintaining unity with God and the world. Jesus is man in both cases.

Tillich feels that Schleiermacher never does rise beyond his anthropological limitations while his New Being concept does. Yet it is more than just possible that it was the apologetic approach taken by Schleiermacher that established this limit rather than his theological thinking. He is examining the role of faith, including the role of faith in the life of Jesus Christ. Tillich, on the other hand, is thinking ontologically and arguing from that point of view, consequently it is not surprising that he discusses ontology. The objection Tillich raises in his contrast is less obvious when we read what Schleiermacher himself wrote in his speeches On Religion:

When, in the mutilated delineations of His life I contemplate the sacred image of Him who has been the author of the noblest that there has yet been in religion, it is not the purity of His moral teaching, which but expressed what all men who have come to consciousness of their spiritual nature, have with Him in common; . . . and it is not the individuality of His character, the

close union of high power with touching gentleness, for every noble, simple spirit must in a special situation display some traces of a great character. All those things are merely human. But the truly divine element is the glorious clearness to which the great idea He came to exhibit attained in His soul. This idea was that all that is finite requires a higher mediation to be in accord with the Deity, and that for man under the power of the finite and particular, and too ready to imagine the divine itself in this form, salvation is only to be found in redemption.

If all finite things require the mediation of a higher being. . . what mediates must not again require mediation, and cannot be purely finite. It must belong to both sides, participating in the Divine Essence in the same way and in the same sense in which it participates in human nature. . . . This consciousness of the singularity of His knowledge of God and of His existence in God, of the original way in which this knowledge was in Him, and of the power thereof to communicate itself and awake religion, was at once the consciousness of His office as mediator and of His divinity.<sup>12</sup>

Schleiermacher's concept of Jesus as being the bearer of "the great idea" is certainly parallel to Tillich's concept of the bearer of the "New Being". Schleiermacher distinguishes between the human virtues of Jesus as the exponent of the Christian religion setting an example for all men which all men will find attainable as men of faith, and the divine element in Jesus which constitutes Him as mediator between God and men for their redemption. Tillich distinguishes between the human life of Jesus of Nazareth lived out under the common existential conditions under which all men must live, and the New Being revealed in the Christ as essential man maintaining relationship with God's Spirit in the unity of His life which constitutes Him as mediator between God and men by revealing the pathway to reconciliation. Neither Schleiermacher nor Tillich feels that Jesus is the only necessary mediator, but both agree that historically it has worked out that way, and therefore in Jesus all men are provided with the classic example, so to speak.



It is interesting that both Schleiermacher and Tillich lay great stress upon the way the mediator participates fully in both humanity and divinity, hence both focus upon the two-nature doctrine in their Christologies. Yet both deny the traditional two-nature doctrine since both hold an essentialist concept of the Divine rather than the Biblical concept of a transcendent Creator separated from His creatures by His infinite qualitative difference. Here we have Schleiermacher expressing his essentialist doctrine in terms of idealism, "the great idea"; whereas Tillich expresses his doctrine in terms of the ground of all being. Both wrestle with how the Divine Spirit relates to the human spirit of the man Jesus without destroying His humanity.

Tillich makes a genuine attempt to find for Jesus Christ a vital place in his system. He refers to the "Christological norm" and the "Christological answer to existential finitude". But one is left with the impression that Jesus Christ is being used as a mere example of the idea of the New Being, and that He is not crucial to the system as such. Since He has made His mark in history, Tillich includes Him in the system. The system stands quite independent from Christ and the place of Christ is over against the system rather than as foundational to the system. He is included as the "norm" because Tillich's own commitment is clear, but since He is not basic to the formulations He can easily be bypassed.

David Hopper concludes his analysis with this evaluation of Tillich:

Tillich's Christology, of course, has been the center of much criticism already. Karl Barth, George Tavard, Kenneth Hamilton, Robert C. Johnson, along with many others, have variously expressed dissatisfaction with Tillich's understanding of the person and work of Christ. I cannot but agree with much of this criticism; for, however broad Tillich's starting point in ontology, the place that he finally allows for Christ is really too narrow, too restricted. Independent of the revelation in Christ, Tillich is able to assert that 'essen-



tial humanity includes the union of God and man'. (S.T. II, p. 94). This, he says, is a derivative of 'the dialectics of the infinite and the finite'. As a result of this prior determination Christology itself is reduced to the statement that 'essential manhood has appeared under the conditions of existence'. (ibid). In effect, Tillich brings the whole of Christology down to a single theory of the atonement, the moral exemplar theory. On this point the New Testament and church history permit a much wider expression of faith. This the church must surely consider.<sup>15</sup>

Tillich's Christology as an example of his doctrine of the self in its normative manifestation, suffers from the same weaknesses as does the doctrine itself over against the Biblical context from which it comes. Just as he extracted the Biblical idea of spirit and elevated it above other dimensions or levels of the personality, subordinating both the organic or biological and the psychological elements in order to give priority to the "spiritual dimension" of the "centered self"; so he extracted the Biblical idea of New Being, which he thinks of as the actualized spiritual dimension of the centered self rising to self-transcendence, and subordinated existential humanity which is subject to failure and incompleteness and even Jesus Himself. He goes so far to protect the humanity of Jesus that in the end He is true humanity but nothing beyond that. The concrete and historic person yields to the idea.

Just as the Biblical idea that a man is a soul and has a body and a spirit is ignored, consequently the way the soul relates to itself, to others in the community, and to God within existential bonds defined by the covenant concept is attenuated by Tillich so that the "spirit" becomes lost in abstraction; so the Biblical idea of Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and man, being in Himself both God and man, is ignored. The term "mediator" is reduced to symbolic value standing for example. In both cases the covenant relationship is not considered by Tillich who tries to achieve a ground of unity on the basis of the elements extracted.

Tillich's understanding of spirit in the process of self-actualization and of New Being breaking into manifestation within humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth who is in that sense the Christ, the one who has achieved self-actualization, establishes the priority of potentiality over existential reality.

Footnotes to Chapter 11

1. J. H. Thomas, Paul Tillich: An Appraisal, (London: S.C.M. 1963) p. 91, 94-95.
2. Paul Tillich, The New Being, (London: S.C.M. 1956), p. 22
3. Op cit., Vol. II, p. 93, 94
4. cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 126, 127
5. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 41
6. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 168
7. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 169
8. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 160
9. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 149, 150
10. cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 179. Salvation, for Tillich, is ultimately the purging and cleansing of human activities in anticipation of an ultimate convergence of human and divine creativity, a final union of God and man in activity. This is the reality of the New Being as in Christ, incorporating all men into the New Creation. It sets man's creativity in the universal grace of God in a dynamic identity:  

It means that one is drawn into the power of the New Being in Christ, which makes faith possible; that it is the state of unity between God and man, no matter how fragmentarily realized. Acceptance that one is accepted is the paradox of salvation.
11. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 150
12. F. Schleiermacher, On Religion, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958 ed. translated by John Oman), p. 246, 247. Although Schleiermacher in this speech goes on to suggest that there is nothing unique about the office of the mediator and in fact leaves the way open for others than Jesus Christ to fulfil that office, he does not develop this line of thought either here in the speeches or in The Christian Faith. This procedure would suggest that he was establishing a category for his apologetic purposes in this speech, although it was not his intention to suggest that any man other than Jesus did in fact fill that category as mediator. It is history rather than ontology that witnesses to Jesus' uniqueness.
13. Op cit., p. 178

### Tillich's Autobiographical Approach to Theology

Within the confines of his formal system, Tillich has set forth his understanding of the way the essential self is in its centeredness and how it can rise through the process of self transcendence to fulfil its potentiality as the "image of God". He has set forth many of the implications of this process, the structure of being manifesting being-itself. The "hinge", whereby the essential self overcomes the existential conditions under which it lives, is explained, indicating the limitations of each condition. The "symbols" which enable the essential self to know being-itself are considered. The most pressing question as to whether or not this in fact has been accomplished in human history is answered in the New Being revealed in Jesus the Christ who is the bearer of the New Being. Hence, for Tillich, the system answers the essential questions of the human self and its conditions, pointing the course that man should follow to rise from his existential condition of estrangement and anxiety, without hope in the world.

The thesis that I have put forth is that within the Self-World correlation, the basis of his system, Tillich has argued for the dominance of the World, ontology understood in essentialist terms, and fitted the Self into this formal pattern, while in fact the aspects of the Self as it is known and experienced asserts a constant tension so that in effect it is the existential Self which dominates the scene upsetting the neat classifications of the system of thought. In particular it is Tillich's own self which asserts itself in his quest for identity, and the system is his autobiographical attempt to answer the questions raised. Now since his own self raises existential questions, the essentialist answers given do not meet the tensions but only point to a way of describing them. This means that the answers given are primarily formulations which meet the occasion of the moment and which are



subject to constant review. The historic fact that Tillich did not substantially change his mind concerning the system as presented does not remove this possibility. Even in his analysis of the rise of the Self through self-transcendence, it is the uniqueness of the Self that stands out as the final conclusion in the midst of a system which attempts to explain everything in universals. Even the New Being, although described in universal terms, in fact finds expression in Jesus Christ, the one concrete example. The way to self-transcendence is strewn with too many hazards to make a completely abstract analysis much more than a signpost pointing to a distant goal. We will now return to Tillich's own life and pilgrimage and consider his autobiographical approach.

In chapter one reference was made to where Tillich gives three causes for his "so-called romantic relation to nature"; namely, his personal experience of 'mystical participation' in nature, the impact of German poetic literature which is full of expressions of nature mysticism, and his Lutheran background which influenced him to reject the doctrine of the so-called "Extra Calvinisticum". This he explains in the autobiography which appears in Kegley and Bretall's anthology of essays on Tillich.<sup>1</sup> This basic bias was instilled from earliest childhood, shaped by his background and experiences. Philosophically this was given direction by his early acquaintance with Schelling and Fichte, which he later developed in his thesis work at university.<sup>2</sup> Theologically his Lutheranism reasserted itself<sup>3</sup> over the years, the first test being his struggle for autonomy over against the authorities in his life symbolized by his father, and the second being his debate with Karl Barth who confirmed him in his position by attacking him.<sup>4</sup> Confirmation in his Lutheranism resulted in his firm rejection of the Extra Calvinisticum along with Barth's position which was that the Word of God carried its own authority

and all men must be confronted with this directly. The Extra Calvinisticum is the doctrine that there is an infinite qualitative difference between the creature and the Creator and these two are not to be confused; whereas the "Infra Lutheranism" is the opposite doctrine that the divine can assume and indwell the creaturely which can then manifest the divine presence. These doctrines affect the understanding of Christology and the Sacraments. For Tillich the Infra Lutheranism is basic to his system.

Armed with his philosophical and theological orientation which was consistent with his earliest training and romantic experience, Tillich set out in his search for identity convinced that there was an underlying unity to everything which need only be expressed in an ontological framework of thought. Subsequently the existential circumstances of his life, notably the first World War and the intellectual ferment in Germany which had political implications prepared Tillich for reading the existential philosophers and theologians sympathetically. First he broke with idealism as such, then with liberalism, later with the neo-orthodox, and yet later with positivism and phenomenology. Interest in social issues and history led Tillich to take existential concerns seriously and he was impressed by Nietzsche and Heidegger. However, his basic commitment was to ontology and he attempted to assimilate all these influences within the scope of one system.<sup>5</sup> Almost by accident, certainly by history, Tillich came to his task.

In following Tillich's personal development we have seen that even as early as his 1912 thesis he is convinced of a ground of unity existing between any coincidence of opposites which might well appear on the surface to be irreconcilable. This is the pattern of his life as well as a principle of his methodology. While growing up in the shadow of his distinguished father, he sought freedom of thought yet without sacrificing continuity with the

tradition to which he was committed. He was attracted to the works of Schleiermacher and Schelling<sup>6</sup> because in these he felt that they held everything together in a synthesis which was more than the purely intellectual unity of Hegel. His quarrel with Barth was over the possible dualism that he saw to be implicit in transcendentalism, especially in the doctrine of the Extra Calvinisticum.<sup>7</sup> He welcomed Kant's approach to the moral law in terms of human freedom which he felt supported his principle of identity through aesthetics. He emphasized the points of contact between Schelling and the existentialists<sup>8</sup> in that both stressed the importance of the experience of faith in life, and in this way he tried to bridge the gap between theology and philosophy. In the midst of his discussion of history and social movements,<sup>9</sup> his ideas about the Self provide the key to meaning and purpose in history, as he expounds personality in terms of freedom and self-transcendence, a free microcosm of being existing in relation to the world on the one hand and to the ground of all being on the other. The doctrine of the Self becomes the ground of unity which holds all these together in a living synthesis. In effect, he is saying that a man in himself holds the key to his past and his present, to the abstract and the existential, to freedom and experience, to theology and philosophy, to finitude and to faith, to history and to self-realization. The Self is this unity and all apparent irreconcilable opposites can be transcended in man.

But who is this man of whom he speaks? When he comments in "On the Boundary"<sup>10</sup> that it has been his fate "to stand between alternatives", at home in neither, but aware of the fruitful positions taken by others, he gives us a key to the understanding of his own personal search. Not happy with either pole in any discussion, he always sought the ground of unity underlying both positions. This is what he did, for example, in each of the dimensions



of the struggle with his father's authority, and it became a basic principle of life for him and a way to self-realization. Since these methods arose out of his own life experience they are an aid to understanding the man, not just the man's thought. Seen in this light, his doctrine of the Self represents Tillich's own odyssey along life's road, which path he describes as the process of self-realization.

Tillich explains how this process was followed in relation to his involvement in Religious Socialism after the first World War:

In my search for this common criterion I discovered that the modern trends of thought which are rooted in the Enlightenment are substantially Christian, in spite of their critical attitude toward ecclesiastical Christianity. They are not, as they are often called, pagan. Paganism, especially in nationalistic garb, first appeared after World War I in connection with the complete disintegration of Christian humanism. There is no such thing as apologetics in the face of this kind of paganism. The only question is survival or extinction. This is the same struggle that prophetic monotheism has always carried on against demonic polytheism. Apologetics was possible in antiquity only because polytheism was suffused with humanism, and in humanism Christianity and antiquity had a common criterion at their disposal. . .

It was only after the war that the reality and nature of this Christian humanism were brought fully home to me. My contact with the Labor Movement, with the so-called dechristianized masses, showed me clearly that here too, within a humanistic framework, the Christian substance was hidden, even though this humanism looked like a materialistic philosophy that had long since been discredited by art and science. An apologetic message to the masses was even more necessary and more difficult than to the intelligentsia since the former's opposition to religion was heightened by class antagonism. The Church's attempt to frame an apologetic message without considering the class struggle was doomed to complete failure at the outset. Defending Christianity in this situation required active participation in the class struggle. Only religious socialism could carry the apologetic message to the proletarian masses.<sup>11</sup>

In his early career Tillich was involved in a movement which could not help but shape his thinking and approach for the future. His kairos doctrine was worked out under these circumstances, but this doctrine, which underlies his understanding of the Protestant Principle in Christian history, is rooted



in his personal experience, points to involvement in divine action in history, and leads into participation in the community of the New Being (a corollary doctrine to these others). The ground of unity is actually his apologetic purpose within a humanistic context of thought and action. This dynamic presentation is missed when the abstracted form appears in the Systematics<sup>12</sup> with its formal presentation of essential relationships within the system. This later reflection must be recognized as secondary to the existential presentation which in fact we get when we read his autobiographical outline of how and why these ideas took the particular shape that they did.

Tillich's personal history did lead him into the situations from which he was to gain his insights, and also led him to modify his approach or emphasis as he developed within differing contexts and circumstances.

Perhaps the classic example of this modification is seen in his theological discussions centering on the kairos doctrine and the Protestant Principle giving way to discussions concerned with the individual and the New Being. This shift in focus follows his own odyssey and interests. There was always a tension between his personal search for identity and social concerns imposed by history upon him since he lived in Germany at the time when he did, however, with the release from social pressures in their acute form he had time to reconsider his own personal search. It may be no accident that the autobiographical prefaces were written after his fiftieth year near the close of the first half of the twentieth century. He was reflecting upon his personal pilgrimage and the forces which shaped his life and thought.

Historically he explored these aspects one at a time over against a particular social context, but he held them in tension in his own thinking

and they became poles within his later theological discussion. Their final resolution lay for Tillich in the fullness of self-realization when both individual destiny and social destiny becomes universally actualized in the ground of all being which will come in the community of the New Being. Meanwhile Tillich carried these poles in a state of tension within himself and reflected them in his system of thought. Even to see these two as underlying polarities in his personal tension, reflecting his own life and experience, is to go far towards explaining the apparent shift in his thinking from the German context to the American context. History gives rise to thinking. Understood from the vantage point of his life's end, these thoughts can be seen as the polarities they were in his own experience. This shift from one pole to the other corresponded to his deepening understanding of his own identity which he terms a boundary situation between polarities, yet with further implications in his doctrine of the Self and in his Christology. However, these poles are never dealt with together in the system and it is only when we see them as underlying the system as his own personal tension can we see how, for example, the New Being and the Protestant Principle are vitally interrelated within the tensions experienced by the author. This explains that both doctrines are in fact integral to the system even if all the connections are not explained in terms of the ontological ideas. It is in the reflection of this personal existential dimension, that Tillich's commitment to Christology must be seen even in the midst of his discussion of the social dimensions of his thought which are often presented in such an apologetic way (Christian apologetics) that it obscures his own faith.

In considering Tillich's autobiographical approach and personal investment in the writing of his theology we have seen that the underlying tensions: the Self-World correlation, the existentialist-essentialist

polarity, and the mankind-individual relationship underlie the system. This last underlying tension arises from his autobiographical approach. We have seen that the system does not stand or fall by itself, but that even to understand what Tillich intends it is necessary to know the man himself and the background of his life and times in order to understand just what he is trying to do and what he means by the questions raised and the answers dealt with in such a consistent and systematic method. This, however, is true of any system of thought since it is rooted in history. The thing which is so distinctive about Tillich's whole approach is the large place given over to existential concerns.

Kenneth Hamilton attacks Tillich on the possibility of erecting a system at all which will in any way deal with existential matters. He follows Kierkegaard in this position, since Kierkegaard faced a parallel situation in his day with the systematizing approach of Hegel and the Hegelians. Hamilton refers to Kierkegaard:

Kierkegaard believed an existential system to be a contradiction in terms, yet he remarked that the speculative philosopher who created the system wished to be an existing individual at the same time as he abolished existence. . . . He thought that he could be an individual without subjectivity, an individual who existed sub specie aeterni. The whole of Tillich's system is based on the claim that it is possible - and necessary - for man to escape from subjectivity and arrive at the 'really real'. . . . Therefore he trusts ontology to put him into touch with reality and interprets everything in terms of the universal and the eternal, using the system as the fitting means by which to come to the knowledge of the whole.<sup>15</sup>

Hamilton goes on to admit that Tillich does not forget about the empirical world. He speaks about people, places a high value on history and culture, and claims to stand very definitely with the existentialists. In the end, Hamilton rejects Tillich's existentialist posture with the charge that he is in fact an idealist, although not a classical

essentialist philosopher of the Hegelian stamp. The system is opposed to his existentialism.

While Tillich has rejected Hegel's dialectic as a principle for interpreting the Universe, accepting in its place inspiration from Schelling's Positive Philosophy, yet the result is no departure from idealism. For Schelling's modification of Hegel does not break with the idealistic claim to grasp reality as a whole. The speculative basis of truth is maintained, although it is widened from the pure thought of Hegel so as to include revelation. There is no surrender here to existential categories, because revelation is defined in essentialist terms.<sup>14</sup>

Hamilton misses the point that Tillich is not erecting an existentialist system, but he is writing an essentialist system. However, his history forces him to reflect and write out of existentialist concerns and these in turn return to haunt his system as the "really real" he is searching for.



Footnotes to Chapter 12

1. Kegley & Bretall, Theology of Paul Tillich (London: MacMillan, 1964), p. 5
2. Paul Tillich, On the Boundary (London: Collins, 1967) p. 7, 46ff.
3. Ibid., p. 29, 58ff
4. Ibid., p. 40ff
5. Ibid., p. 47-57
6. Kegley & Bretall, Theology of Paul Tillich p. 6, 10
7. Ibid., p. 5
8. Op cit., p. 56
9. Kegley & Bretall,
10. Op cit., p. 13
11. On the Boundary, p. 60-62
12. Systematic Theology, Vol. III, p. 362-372
13. Kenneth Hamilton, The System and the Gospel (London: S.C.M., 1963) p. 174
14. Ibid., p. 182

#### IV. CONCLUSION

## Conclusion

For Tillich the basic ontological structure of reality is expressed in the Self-World correlation. In order to hold these two together he seeks the ground of unity, through "the principle of identity", as it is manifested in the Absolute or Being-itself. His analysis, as we have seen, tries to express the essence of this ontological structure within his formal system of theological concepts. As long as he is dealing with abstract categories and concepts he is consistent. He is able to apply his methodology which aims at expressing the underlying identity by holding correlated polarities in tension, while identifying levels of being to resolve apparent discrepancies. This is the key to understanding his system. We have seen how these aims and ideas developed in the course of his life and career which was deeply invested in nineteenth century thought-forms and attitudes. His methodology was learned early from his mentor Schelling, yet his career was lived out and judged by the first half of this present century.

The testing of his ideas and systematic formulations arose from the historic and personal experiences to which he was subjected. His central doctrine of the Self was challenged by his existential selfhood which meant that his theological answers were given to existential questions. In this sense at least his theology is autobiographical. The organization of his Systematic Theology is his attempt to give theological answers to five basic human questions as we have seen. I have tried to support the thesis that he was preoccupied with the human situation and attracted to the existentialist position, especially in his understanding of anxiety, hubris, finitude, and courage. Yet because these were always discussed and analyzed in an abstract and objective way, Tillich tried to subordinate this subject matter, so to

speak, to his formal treatment of ontology and essence. His selection of "Existentialist" authors, including Plato and Schelling, bears this out since existence to them was merely a topic for analysis. Tillich, however, did try to give a larger place to existence within his system, although he could never surrender his nineteenth century search for harmony and identity and finally reduced existential reality as experienced to symbols within his system.

As well as in his personal search for selfhood, this testing of his ideas arose from the historic setting of his home in wartime and postwar Germany, then in the rise of Hitler and his exile to America. "Many of his ideas regarding religion, culture, history, and the breaking into history by the Absolute (kairos concept), all were developed in his wrestling with this experience and that of his national confreres. Religious Socialism was an attempt to give both theoretical and practical expression to these ideas. Here the pattern of Tillich providing the systematic and theoretical answers to the practical existential situation was established. Somehow the practical concerns dominated the theoretical, not because they were more cogent, but they were more urgent. Then ultimately, these ideas were reduced to a doctrine of history within Tillich's systematic formulation, with all practical teeth removed and quite abstracted from their Religious Socialist matrix. Again, the nineteenth century search for harmony and identity predominated in Tillich, although making necessary his detachment and objectivity from the actual experience of life in order to achieve this order. Again, his theology is autobiographical in the sense that it is his later reflection and analysis upon ideas developed through his own life experiences.

While it is true to say that the centre of the system is the Self, there is continuing tension as to whether it is the doctrine of the Self in its



formal expression or the self as experienced by the author himself. The autobiographical wrestling with ideas and situations would suggest the latter, while the placing of the Self-World correlation in the heart of his system confirms the former. Certainly the world is subordinated in fact to the Self with which it is seen in tension, since Tillich begins with existential and therefore personal questions. While Tillich rejected, and rightly so, the appellation "existentialist theologian", he did address himself to the human situation as his starting point and his most penetrating insights derive from this base. His passion for ontology produced the system, his theology, but like the world in the correlation it appears as but a context or framework for the Self.

These tests of his systematic formulations reveal the underlying and unresolved tensions within his system. There is the tension between the doctrine of the Self over against the self as experienced; between the existential question which requires the wrestling with reality and the theological answer given in terms of abstraction, essence, and ontology; and between the individual self, his later emphasis finding its focus in the concept of the New Being, and the self as related to others and involved in the movements of history. This last tension is suggested in Tillich's acknowledged shift in emphasis from Religious Socialism to the New Being with all the personal implications involved. This shift demonstrates that the underlying tension implicit in his autobiographical approach is capable of affecting his systematic task.

By contrasting Tillich with Heidegger it becomes clear that Tillich is not prepared to follow through on his existential starting point, as Heidegger insists is the only valid way, ~~and~~ by retreating into essentialist analysis for his theology his real position is apparent. He is like Schelling in that

he subordinates existence to essence. He is like Schleiermacher in that he develops the principle of identity along romantic lines, relating existence to the doctrine of creation so that the New Being becomes but an idealized example. Over against Heidegger, a prime exponent of one twentieth century approach to existence, Tillich appears like an idealist philosopher who is using modern language and analysis to update and expand old approaches and concepts. Tillich is not prepared to "leap into the circle" with Heidegger and to wrestle with reality without the support of an objective frame of reference whether termed "theology" or something else. Until this basic stance is clear, however, the terminology becomes confused since the words referring to existence are capable of many shades of interpretation. Tillich uses these terms in a general way which becomes a descriptive way; whereas others like Heidegger are using these terms in quite specific ways related to their own stance. For Tillich, however, this underlying tension continues throughout his works since he is constantly pulled toward the reality he experiences directly even while he is attempting to be objective.

The basic correlation of the Self and the world makes possible the way the self becomes aware of the world and also of itself. Self-awareness is based in self-centeredness. World-awareness leads to self-transcendence. From this proposition Tillich seeks to show how man rises from his existential knowledge of his finitude to higher knowledge of ontology. This is the "hinge" in Tillich's thought whereby he seeks to overcome the basic tension between reality as it is experienced under the givenness of creation within the bounds of human finitude and reality as it is ontologically. The operating category is freedom which allows man to transcend himself and fulfil his destiny as the image of God. Does man cease to exist when he transcends himself and reaches his telos? Somehow the translation of the existing self

into an essential self, even perfectly manifesting the ground of being, has the ring of death about it. The abstracted "spirit" that Tillich points to somehow lacks the vitality that spirit must have to be spirited and not merely a shadow or ghost. The Hebrew stress on the wholeness of the human person, which I have examined in some detail, has life. The hinge could work if it was a way of relating two levels of life or of personality, but it falls down because it is not so much a real hinge as perhaps a transformer.

The Biblical notion of freedom is not a freedom from our creaturely limitations as such, but rather a freedom from bondage in order to fulfil our creaturely calling. It is a relational matter involving the whole person and the whole of society, aiming at the redemption of the whole world. The transformation taught in the New Testament is not a translation into an essential self (a Greek notion), but is an empowering to fulfil our creaturehood in relationship to God. I have not introduced this Biblical notion in any proof-text type of approach to knock Tillich down, but I feel that the Hebrew understanding, and the New Testament authors reflected this, provides a viable alternative to Tillich's highly schematized approach. I feel that "covenant" is a far richer and more meaningful concept, for example, than Tillich's "hinge" (my term) which has the effect of losing the human self along the way. By transforming the self into an essential being the existential self loses out. Tillich's use of spirit as a "symbol" suggests that he is aware of this lack of reality and the need to employ more dynamic terms and concepts.

The heart of the system is how Tillich relates the level of the existential questions to the level of his theological answers. The way he has defined theology makes it little different from philosophy in practice, both being the



search for universals and finding the basis of all unity through reason. He reflects a Kantian understanding of reason in that the structuring logos of the Self is what Kant terms the aesthetic judgment faculty. Tillich speaks of the grasping-shaping function of the reason applicable both to philosophy and theology. God is non-objectifiable and the world of phenomena is essentially agnostic according to Kant. Therefore the ground of any knowledge of God, as also of any knowledge of the world of phenomena, is the Self. Philosophy is limited to reason alone, while theology employs revelation. But how theology employs revelation involves many thorny problems and Tillich addresses himself to these in detail. The romanticism of both Schelling and Schleiermacher greatly influenced Tillich to find the answers to these questions primarily in terms of the Self not the world, following the pattern set by Kant. Revelation for Tillich is primarily the experience of the self living in self-awareness under conditions of finitude, that is the human spirit becoming aware of reality. By the application of reason this self then becomes aware of the Self of the Absolute and is able to rise in faith to transcend itself.

This process of self-transcendence through faith may well be assisted by culture and religion if these are properly seen as symbols to be used in our personal search. Here is Tillich's mysticism in clear focus. I have pointed out that his discussion of faith in this context which is abstract and theoretical almost loses sight of the function of faith. Yet when he is discussing faith over against anxiety it is dynamic. Once again the existential aspects seem to be more urgent and vital than the ontological when he expands these in the system. The relationship of the self to the Self, and of the Self to God complicates the picture since self-transcendence implies for Tillich that it is possible for the self to be related to God. We seem to



be given a mystical answer when faith is under discussion, a philosophical answer when reason is under discussion, and a religious answer when "spirit", probably the basic symbol, is under discussion. Just where the Self of doctrine and theory fits into this relational puzzle is not always clear. In fact, we might even wonder whether this ontological analysis is required.

It is when he discusses the doctrine of the Self formally within the system that Tillich uses the concept of spirit to set forth the dynamic principle of the "totally centered self", which actualizes its potential in such a way as to achieve self-transcendence. The spirit is the motivating power which integrates life in the centre of the self and then moves this centre to rise to higher levels of being. Tillich's vague term "participation", by which he refers to this movement of the spirit has mystical overtones. The centered self constitutes itself as a person, yet somehow being a person is to rise beyond the self, participating in the New Being which transcends the self. I have pointed out that Tillich is using the term "self", as also "person", in several ways, leading to confusion. When, however, Tillich speaks of self-transcendence in terms of faith and existential concern he is much clearer and more faithful in the concept of spirit with which he began. In fact in this context he is closer to a Biblical understanding of a personal spirit which actualizes the self through relationships with the divine Spirit and with other human spirits.

The question arises at this point whether the concept of the New Being is integral to the system, referring to the doctrine of the Self as the goal and climax of self-transcendence thus resolving the Self-World tension, or is unique referring to Christology in Christian theology. There is confusion in the way Tillich uses the term, sometimes giving one impression and another time

giving the other. At any rate it is clear that the New Being does refer to Jesus as the Christ, the bearer of the New Being. If it refers to everyman, and Jesus Christ is but one example of fulfilment, then it must be a part of the doctrine of the Self. The identity of Christ is at stake in this discussion as it has been since the beginning of Christianity in theological discussions about the "two natures" of Christ. This is the pivot of any theology. Tillich is not prepared to locate the New Being on either side of this paradox, since he regards this doctrine as the bridge holding both together. The New Being is both human and the manifestation of divinity. In contrasting Tillich with Schleiermacher we can see that Tillich begins with divine essence, whereas Schleiermacher begins with human feelings. Yet in spite of this starting point we are never sure where Tillich actually stands. Is the New Being a concept belonging primarily to the essentialist system, or is it the existential reality of the man Jesus?

We noted at every point that Tillich was personally invested in the existential questions that he addressed himself to in his theology. The writing of his theology was autobiographical in the sense that he was reflecting on situations that arose within the various contexts of history in which he found himself. In terms of the underlying tensions in his system we noted that the Self-World correlation while basic to his system, also held within itself unresolved questions as to the investment of Tillich's own self. We looked in detail at the tension between the existential and essential polarities of each subject that he discussed. In both these Tillich argued for the dominance of the general or universal - the world and the essential. We saw, however, that in fact the concrete - the Self and the existential - set the agenda and determined the course of his discussion. The third underlying tension is more directly related to his autobiographical approach,

namely the relation of the individual to society in general. In this regard he considered socialism and history while he was involved in actual movements, then later extended these ideas into concepts of destiny and the Kingdom of God. Increasingly, however, he was more preoccupied with matters relating to the individual Self and the New Being. As we have seen his own investment in the Self was great and often indistinguishable, certainly with regard to the existential base for his later reflections and theologizing.

Thus we conclude where we began. The doctrine of the Self in the theology of Paul Tillich is not an easy doctrine to isolate since it pervades the entire theological system. It is, beyond any doubt, right at the heart of Tillich's thought as one of the vital components of the basic ontological structure as he sees it. It is my contention that the doctrine of the Self surreptitiously takes over as the operative basis of Tillich's theological formulations, and that the rest of his entire system can be viewed as a context against which this basic doctrine might be put in perspective. No matter what else can be said for or against Tillich's theology, at least it was his own reflections about life and selfhood as he experienced it and as he sought to set his goals and aspirations in faith. To this extent the Systematic Theology stands as the witness to the life and thought of a great man, a great teacher, and a great Christian.

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